Process Evaluation of the jobLink Resource Centres

Final Report

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The overall purpose of the process evaluation of the Resource Centres (RCs) located in Windsor and Sudbury was to review the administrative arrangements developed during implementation, including the partnerships established and the various service delivery models used.

Resource Centres are multi-service centres that provide information about training, education, and employment opportunities in local communities. Resource Centre sites were identified through local jobLink Ontario planning processes. The approach taken by each community differs based on local needs.

In 1995, Ontario changed government. While jobLink Ontario was eliminated, Resource Centres remained in place. However, the uncertainty surrounding the future of the RCs in the new provincial context had some impacts on the development of the Resource Centres in their first year of operations.

Methodology

Three main sources of information were used to address the key evaluation questions: review of background information; site visits; and follow-up research. The first phase of information collection involved reviewing a variety of documents provided by the Project Authority. The site visits to Windsor and Sudbury were conducted during the week of March 11, 1996. During the site visits, key informants were interviewed and documents gathered. The consultants also toured the facilities.

During follow-up research, the documents collected during the site visits were reviewed and analyzed. Telephone interviews were conducted with individuals who could not be interviewed in-person during the site visits (e.g., some RC staff and managers, community agency representatives) and others with whom in-person interviews could not be completed during those visits. A total of 28 interviews (12 in Windsor and 16 in Sudbury) were conducted during the site visits and follow-up research.

Limitations

The major limitation to this study is the short time frame within which it had to be conducted. The short time frame meant that not all individuals who could have been consulted during the study were consulted.

The strike at the provincial level also had an impact on the conduct of this study. It has been very difficult to get in touch with the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) representative in Sudbury while the strike was on. Attempts to contact the individual were also made once the strike was over, unsuccessfully. Finally, consultations with RC clients were not part of this study.

Findings - Windsor

Partners

There are three main partners involved to varying extent in the operations of the Windsor RC. MCSS provides the core funding for the RC, as well as access to MCSS programming. The main role of HRDC as an operating partner is to provide funding to the RC (through MCSS). HRDC also provides a significant amount of technical support and equipment, and contributes one in-kind on-site employment counsellor. Overall accountability, day-to-day management and delivery of the Windsor RC is provided by the City of Windsor.

In general, the roles of the three operating partners are clear and distinct. However, the management committee, comprised of representatives from the three operating partners, has not met on a regular basis. The City of Windsor currently runs the RC with minimal input at a strategic level above and beyond technical and financial support from the other two partners.

The Youth Employment Centre and the Unemployed Help Centre receive funding from the RC and support the delivery of RC services. A Youth Employment Centre counsellor is on-site one day per week and the Unemployed Help Centre also provides vocational counselling off-site to severely employment-challenged SARs, both under service delivery contracts. In addition, a service delivery contract has been developed with a local agency to provide in-depth assessment services for certain RC clients. The roles and responsibilities of these other partners are clearly outlined in their service delivery agreements.

The proposal to establish the Windsor RC included the intention to develop and consult with a local advisory committee. While a list of participants for the committee has been established, the committee has never met. Various interviewees expressed frustration regarding the lack of input they have been able to provide into the on-going operations of the RC. However, at the time of the site visit, it was anticipated that the advisory committee would soon become established and operational.

Structure

The Windsor RC is located in the same building as the local CEC, but on a separate floor. The entire Employment Services unit of the City of Windsor moved into the RC. There are currently no other partners permanently co-located within the RC.

Sixteen staff are dedicated to providing RC services. The staff composition includes 1 supervisor, 1 receptionist, 2 clerks, 8 employment support caseworkers, 3 job developers, and 1 HRDC counsellor. Originally, two HRDC counsellors were intended to maintain client caseloads and be part of the mainstream counselling team. Changes to the service delivery arrangements between HRDC and the City have resulted in only one HRDC counsellor being on- site. This counsellor does not maintain a client caseload. She provides on-going support to the other counsellors, and participates in case conferencing with the other counsellors and their clients. Her role has become much more focussed on programming and consulting rather than hands-on counselling. The changes to the number as well as the role of the HRDC counsellors have been attributed to the downsizing that HRDC is currently undergoing and the subsequent need for the counsellors within the CEC.

Within the RC, all municipal staff report directly to the supervisor. The HRDC counsellor only reports functionally to the supervisor and continues to report to HRDC for leave and pay-related issues. This reporting structure appears to be working very well.

All RC staff are full-time employees and are technically generalists. Staff have reportedly not received significant amount of training, particularly with respect to computer technology. All counselling staff within the RC are experienced and possess the basic skills necessary to provide services to clients. RC counsellors are now doing more detailed assessments and in-depth counselling than previously. Cross-training between the HRDC counsellor and the other RC counsellors has been viewed as very positive in this regard.

The current SAR caseload in Windsor is estimated to be composed of approximately 75% severely employment-challenged individuals. The RC counsellors refer these clients to specialized community agencies. However, funding cuts have severely limited the ability of many community agencies to absorb these clients, who then come back to the RC. Co-location of community agencies able to handle "hard-core" SARs would streamline and potentially improve the services provided to these clients. While an offer of co-location has been extended to all community agencies, there has been a reluctance on agencies' part to accept the offer for fear that co-location would lead to the loss of their core funding.

Services and Activities Provided at the RC

As clients enter the RC, one of the counsellors is always available to discuss or help direct clients to the available services. Previously, clients had to be referred to the RC by their income maintenance worker. However, it was felt that the referral process was burdensome and was therefore abandoned. Anyone, whether a SAR or not, can access the front-end services and meet with the front-end worker on duty. When needed, a one-on-one appointment with a City of Windsor counsellor is scheduled if the client is a SAR or has been a SAR within the past year. Other clients are referred to the appropriate agency.

Clients are usually asked to complete a self-assessment form prior to meeting a counsellor. An opportunity plan is typically developed during the first or second visit with the counsellor. The plan identifies the client's short- and long-term goals as well as the various actions required to overcome existing barriers and achieve the goals. Clients' training needs are determined during this process. Client files as well as the Client Tracking System are updated regularly. Counsellors are responsible for monitoring client activities, usually every three months. Clients who use RC services are asked to complete a brief evaluation questionnaire, including closed- and open-ended questions, after each visit/use.

The RC has integrated a number of services from both HRDC and the City of Windsor. There are four job banks with labour market information (LMI) on-site within the RC. HRDC is currently working with the RC to link the existing desktop computers with the job banks/LMI for quick reference and for matching clients from the jobLink system with employers in the job banks.

Interviewees felt that the RC provides an integrated system for access to primary information regarding the programs and services available within the community. However, with no on-site partners other than HRDC and the City, on-site integration of programs and services has been limited. The potential availability of new funding caused potential partners to draw back and protect their own

programs in the hopes that they would receive new funding under the jobLink initiative, which may have hindered the integration process. Another factor which hindered the overall integration of services within the RC was the tight time frame required for the design and planning of the RC.

Interviewees were of the opinion that there are continued duplications of services within the community, but not to a great excess. In general, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the RC has had an impact on filling gaps in services since gaps have not been clearly identified.

Resource Centre Implementation and Objectives

The Windsor RC structure involves co-location of the Employment Services Unit of the City of Windsor and one HRDC staff. Partner organizations in the community act as satellites for referrals. An Essex County employment counsellor is also located on-site and provides employment services to her clients from the RC.

The RC has implemented activities and services to meet the majority of the objectives outlined in the implementation proposal. The RC has been able to implement a permanent one-stop approach for access to City of Windsor and HRDC employment services for SARs, but not for other services. Based on a preliminary cursory review of client survey information, most clients report that they are either satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided by the RC.

There are two primary constraints that limit the achievement of the objectives established for the RC. The first is financial. It was reported that co-location of community partners has not occurred due to an uncertainty concerning funding sources and amounts. The second constraint is related to communications. The lack of follow-up with the community advisory committee has left various stakeholders/partners, including community agencies and public sector participants, with a feeling of vagueness.

Funding

For fiscal year 1995/96, the total proposed budget for the Windsor RC was $1,206,000. An estimate of the delivery cost per client is based on total clients served and expenditures incurred by December, 1995. The cost per client can be estimated at $405,459 ÷ 2,041 = $199.

Accountability and Structure for Service Delivery

The Client Tracking System (CTS), designed to track activities of the Employment Services unit within the City of Windsor Social Services organization, was originally implemented as the client tracking system for the RC. A province-wide jobLink client tracking system has subsequently been developed. The CTS tracks client interventions as well as client status. It tracks expenditures on a per client basis in terms of allowances and direct programming expenditures. An "action taken" history is captured for each client, and each paper client file contains additional detailed information regarding the interventions.

Overall financial controls are maintained within the City of Windsor. Monthly reports are prepared and submitted to the RC Manager within the City of Windsor. Quarterly client status/achievement reports as well as expenditure/budget reports are prepared by the City of Windsor and submitted to MCSS.

Findings - Sudbury

In Sudbury, Resource Centres (RCs) have been established in Sudbury Central; Sudbury East (1 central office located in Noelville, and 4 outreach offices located in St-Charles, Warren, Markstay and Alban); Sudbury West (Espanola); Chapleau; and Manitoulin Island.

Partners

All Sudbury Resource Centres include MCSS as an operating partner. The main role of the MCSS in the RCs is to provide funding. Each RC has an accountability centre responsible for operations. The accountability centre varies by location. While HRDC has not signed contractual agreements with individual RCs[1], it did provide in-kind contributions to all RCs in the form of equipment.

Overall, it was felt that the respective roles and responsibilities of the partners involved in the various Resource Centres in Sudbury were clear to those

[1] As in Windsor, contractual agreements were entered into by HRDC and MCSS. The latter in turn signed contractual agreements with the individual Resource Centres.

involved. The concerns regarding the roles and responsibilities of partners were related to issues of equality in the decision-making process.

Most of the key informants interviewed identified community agencies, particularly those which refer clients to the RC, as informal partners of the Resource Centres. In all locations except Sudbury Central, local advisory committees have been established as a mechanism to involve community partners in the Resource Centres. The lack of a local advisory committee in Sudbury Central was attributed to the uncertainty that followed the June 1995 provincial election: partners wanted to wait and see what would happen with the jobLink initiative before setting up a permanent committee.

While the RCs communicated with each other through a formal group before implementation, there has not been any ongoing communication among the five centres since their establishment. Such communication was not consistently perceived as a need by all key informants. Increased communication among the RCs would allow them to share experiences and lessons learned. Such communication might benefit the smaller RCs more than the larger ones.

Structure

Each Resource Centre in Sudbury has a particular structure, described below.

- **Sudbury Central** - Staff from the RC, HRDC, Youth Employment Services (YES) and People United for Self-help (PUSH) as well as the municipality's Employment Support Services unit have been integrated within the centre. The RC provides outreach counselling services to two other Sudbury RCs.

- **Sudbury East** - The central RC-Community Action Network Réseau Action Communautaire (CAN RAC) office, in Noelville, is co-located with Boréal College. Other service providers have come to this RC to provide services on-site on a part-time basis. The model also includes four outreach offices. Budget cuts have led to downsizing at this RC.

- **Sudbury West (Espanola)** - The RC is integrated within the Canada Employment Centre. Income maintenance workers provide services on-site four times a week.

- **Chapleau** - The RC is co-located with Sault College and the municipality's social services. The RC's central office serves two outreach offices. Budget cuts have lead to downsizing at this RC.

- **Manitoulin Island** - The Resource Centre is located in a central office serving two outreach offices.

The roles and responsibilities of Resource Centre staff were generally believed to be clear to all concerned. However, in one RC, it was believed that some Resource Centre workers were now performing more counselling duties than was warranted and were not always referring clients to counsellors when they should be. In addition, one counsellor reported that while he understood the broad mandate of the RC counsellors, he was not sure about the limits of this role. Key informants did not identify major issues or problems related to the reporting structure in any of the RC locations.

While RC staff generally felt well-equipped to perform their duties, most reported a need for ongoing training. Generally, there are no formal mechanisms for assessing training needs in the Sudbury RCs, with the exception of the Sudbury West RC. Ongoing training would contribute to ensuring consistent service.

Services and Activities Provided at the Resource Centres

The same basic services are provided in all Sudbury RC locations. Services can be self-directed or staff-assisted. Typically, the intake for a new client consists of determining the client's status and obtaining basic information. A basic needs assessment is then conducted. Through this assessment, RC staff and the client identify the client's skills, work experience, career goals, etc. and determine an appropriate course of action. If a client is uncertain or unaware of his goals and requires additional counselling, in-depth counselling is then conducted. The referral process is more or less formal depending on the RC location. Generally, there is little follow-up of these referrals in terms of outcomes.

The extent to which various services are integrated within the RCs, as with other aspects, depends on each individual RC. The co-location model, where various service providers are located on the same site, facilitates the integration of services. The co-location model is in use to varying degrees in all the sites except Manitoulin Island. The major advantages of co-location is that it allows clients to have access to numerous services without having to travel between locations, and allows both staff and clients to have access to a range of expertise on-site. Effective coordination of services does not necessarily follow from co-location. Meetings between the various service providers, or partners, appear to facilitate coordination.

In most locations, the community is involved, directly or indirectly, in the Resource Centres. Positive relationships between the various Resource Centres and the respective communities involved were generally reported by key informants. Positive relationships are usually facilitated by the presence of a local advisory committee and other community committees in which Resource Centres staff may be involved, as well as by existing relationships between the RC accountability centre and community organizations.

In general, interviewees reported minimal duplications between the services provided by the respective Resource Centres and others in the community. The potential for duplication of services in small areas with few service providers is limited. Furthermore, many community agencies face budget cuts which limit their ability to provide services, a void which RCs can sometimes fill. However, it was also reported that cuts to programs and services mean that there is a limited pool of services to which some Resource Centres can refer clients, leading to gaps in services. Training is a particularly important gap in small communities.

It was generally felt that all RCs have been successful in establishing a single, integrated system of programs and services for SARs in their community. All but the Sudbury Central RC serve both SAR and non-SAR clients. In Sudbury Central, anyone can use the on-site job banks. However, the remaining resources in the RC can only be accessed by SAR clients. While serving clients other than SARs does not appear to be an issue in some of the Resource Centres examined, it seems to be creating difficulties for others by increasing expenses at a time when funding should be used judiciously.

Resource Centre Implementation and Objectives

As explained previously, almost all Sudbury RCs have some form of co-location model in place. While the co-location model was perceived to be highly effective, the downside is that it can make management of the resource centre more difficult.

In Sudbury Central, the staff were said to have had a major impact on the successful implementation of the co-location model. The presence of an HRDC staff on-site was identified as a particular benefit as it allows the other RC workers to increase their knowledge of employment- and training-related issues as well as their knowledge of community resources. Sudbury East is comprised of one central office and four outreach offices serving smaller communities. While this model was believed to be good in terms of serving the community's needs, the relevance of having sites that serve a very small population was disputed by some key informants.

It was reported that the major factor impacting the success of implementation in Sudbury West was the fact that the Resource Centre had been integrated within the CEC. All resources in this location are equally dedicated to all clients. As a result, many of the costs that would be incurred by the RC if it were located on its own have been, and continue to be, assumed by the CEC. The difficulties experienced by the Sault College has had some impacts on service delivery. The one staff that works in the RC is not supported by the College in her administrative activities anymore and it was feared that further budget cuts would lead to the elimination of some programs of value to clients.

The Manitoulin Island RC is the only RC that does not include any form of co-location with other partners. However, the RC will soon co-locate with the social services office, which was seen as an important move for the Resource Centre. As in other areas, the budget cuts experienced by many organizations mean there are now less programs to which clients can be referred. The major advantage associated with the model in Manitoulin Island is that the size of the centre (small, with one familiar staff) makes clients comfortable about coming to the RC.

Overall, all accounts indicate that Resource Centres have been successful in achieving the majority of the objectives which have been established for them. However, achievement of "collect and analyze data relating to consumers which will assist the community in the ongoing development of their Resource Centre, labour market programs and support services", has been limited. While all Resource Centres collect information on their clients, the extent to which this data is analyzed to assist the *community* in the development of the RCs, labour market programs and support services is limited. The Resource Centres also had to be accessible to the full range of social assistance recipients. Success in this area has not been as great as in the others. For example, not all sites are physically accessible.

The Resource Centres have used a number of approaches to market their services to employers and SAR clients. However, marketing their services to employers was identified by some key informants as an area that required additional efforts. In some areas, marketing activities have been limited because of the uncertainty that followed the provincial elections.

Most RCs appear to meet client needs and service quality expectations. However, most do not have rigorous mechanisms that would allow them to identify client needs, determine whether their services are meeting these needs and adjust services accordingly.

Funding

All RCs receive part or all of their funding from MCSS. Significant in-kind contributions have also been made to RCs by other partners. Estimates of cost per client served are based on information provided in the December, 1995 quarterly reports submitted to MCSS. Based on the figures presented in these reports, the costs per client served, are $12 in Sudbury Central, $83 in Sudbury West, $148 in Manitoulin Island, $222 in Sudbury East, and $702 in Chapleau.

Accountability and Structure for Service Delivery

Each Resource Centre collects the information required to submit a quarterly report to MCSS. While the RCs all collect the information required in the quarterly reports to be submitted to MCSS, they differ in the amount and type of client-related information that they collect. The Sudbury Central and Sudbury West RCs have systems that allow staff to collect a wide range of information. The smaller RCs, which collect information manually, may only collect the basic information which they need to assist their clients.

In addition to reporting to MCSS, the RCs also report to the respective organizations which act as the accountability centre.

Lessons Learned

The information presented below is an amalgamation of the lessons learned from all the sites examined during this study.

a) The need for early identification of existing community services, duplications and gaps.

The identification of existing community services, duplications and gaps should be done prior to the design of a new service delivery organization. It was felt that some RCs were up and running before there was a clear understanding within the community of what services were not currently being provided.

b) Time must be allocated to planning.

The Resource Centres were implemented, according to a number of interviewees, very quickly and without proper planning. This resulted in a lack of consultation with sites concerning their need for equipment, some staff lacking

direction and a proper understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and some partnership negotiations not being closed before the RC's opening.

c) Community involvement in the development and implementation process is both important and demanding.

Involving the community in the RC development process has both positive and negative aspects. By involving the community, gaps can be identified and the need for resources can be determined in consultation with other service providers. In addition, this involvement can contribute to creating a sense of ownership within the community. However, the selection process can also leave scars in the community and this should be acknowledged. Resentment may be created among some agencies. An open, public selection process must therefore be managed carefully. Furthermore, community involvement should be ongoing, especially if promises have been made to this effect.

d) There is a need for solid, ongoing communications/ relationships among key partners.

Interviewees provided examples of instances where a lack of regular communication created uncertainty and anxiety within the planning/ implementation committees as well as within the community agencies. Within the RCs, communication, both formal and informal, between on-site partners is viewed as integral to RC operations.

e) The environment has a major impact on the extent to which Resource Centres can be successful.

Small communities may only provide limited opportunities for training and employment. It can be difficult for clients who are motivated to have access to transportation in order to travel to large communities to participate in training or a job search. Unless these clients can be assisted in their efforts, there is only so much the Resource Centres can do to help clients.

f) Co-location has advantages for both staff and clients but on-site partners must be coordinated and managed effectively.

The co-location of a number of service providers allows staff to better serve clients. However, the co-location of partners who have signed an agreement must be managed and coordinated carefully. Mechanisms that make staff playing different roles within the RC, especially if they come from various organizations, feel like they are part of a single unit must be established.

g) Formal partners must try to set aside their personal needs and interests in order to work for the common good.

It is inevitable that the organizations, and individuals, involved in a partnership agreement will have personal needs and interests that they will want to protect. However, each partner must try to set aside their personal needs and interests, and not come to the table with a personal agenda, so that the common good can be served.

h) Funding issues should be clarified early.

The funding issue should be clarified early in the process. At the time that the planning committees were meeting, community agencies were not certain of the extent to which they would be able to access some of the funds, or what their role would be through the jobLink Initiative if they were selected as the Resource Centre.

I) Partners must have an equal say in the development of the Resource Centre.

If a partnership is to be truly equal, all partners who have signed an agreement must be involved in the implementation and development of the Resource Centre.

j) Existing relationships between the RC accountability centre, and formal and informal partners facilitate implementation.

The existence of relationships between the RC accountability centre and formal partners in the RC as well as informal partners in the community facilitates the implementation and development of the Resource Centre.

k) The continuity of services may be affected by selecting an RC accountability centre that is highly depended on external funding for its cashflow.

In Sudbury, two RC accountability centres have seen their budgets cut dramatically. These cuts have had and will have an impact on the level and scope of services that can be provided at the Resource Centres.

l) **Resource Centres managers/coordinators must balance their own workload with the need to maintain ongoing communications among staff.**

Resource Centre managers or coordinators must ensure that there exist communication mechanisms in place that allow all staff to exchange information and views on a regular basis. Weekly or bi-weekly staff meetings are one way to ensure that all Resource Centre staff, regardless of their organization of origin, feel integrated into the RC and part of a team.

m) **It is important for the performance of staff to be monitored so that training needs can be identified and addressed on a timely basis.**

The performance of Resource Centre staff should be monitored both to ensure that staff get feedback on this issue and to identify the specific areas where additional training might be required.

n) **There might be a need for data collection and reporting to be more consistent across RCs.**

Data is not currently collected and reported consistently across all RCs. While all RCs collect the information necessary to produce quarterly reports which they submit to MCSS, the information contained in these reports is not consistent across all RCs. If consistency in the data collected and reported by different RCs is deemed important, there would be a need to clarify which data should be collected and reported, and how.

Conclusion

A number of common conclusions can be drawn from the review of the Windsor and Sudbury Resource Centres. One of the most significant is that there appears to be a lingering resentment toward the Resource Centres in the locations where local advisory committees have not been established. One conclusion is that community expectations must be managed carefully. If the community is made to feel like it is going to be involved throughout the implementation and development of the RCs, continued involvement should be ensured.

The Resource Centres operated by municipalities on a day-to-day basis seem to have gone ahead with the development of the Resource Centres without much input from their formal partners. If a partnership is to be truly equal, all partners

should feel like their input is important and that it will be taken into account in the development of the RC.

Because of the short time frame within which the Resource Centres were implemented, very little time was dedicated to planning. In some RCs, staff were left to figure out their roles and responsibilities as they went along, without much direction. In the larger RCs, the ability of the staff to work together as a team and their willingness to work collaboratively to develop a new enterprise was lauded as a factor that played an important role in the successful implementation of some of the RCs.

The co-location model presents many advantages. Co-location with HRDC has been identified as having provided particular benefits to other co-located staff. Because of HRDC staff's experience with, and knowledge of, employment- and training-related issues, other RC staff have been able to develop their knowledge of the avenues and possibilities open to clients. On the other hand, HRDC staff have been able to learn about aspects related to clients' employability of which they may have not been aware in the past. However, co-locating with agencies who are highly dependent on core funding poses special challenges in the current environment. Agencies that do not want to lose their core funding may hesitate to co-locate with the RC on a permanent basis.

The environment presents other challenges to the success that can be achieved by the Resource Centres. In addition to the limitations posed by the fiscal environment, the economic environment also limits the extent to which the RCs can help clients in their search for employment. In areas where there are few job opportunities, it can be hard to motivate clients to help themselves.

One issue relevant to most RCs is that there is a need for implementing a mechanism to monitor and assess the training needs of staff. The unequal service provided by the staff of some RCs, as reported by those consulted, indicates that training is an issue that needs to be examined in light of providing quality services to clients.

Despite the difficulties encountered and barriers that can sometimes limit success, the majority of the RCs examined appear to have been successful in meeting their clients' needs, to the extent that they could. While there remain issues to be addressed to improve RC operations, accounts from the majority of those consulted in this study report that Resource Centres have provided a valuable resource to the communities where they are located.

Areas for Further Research

One important area that has not been addressed in this study, because of time and budget constraints, is client-related issues. It is important to consult clients directly in order to gauge their satisfaction with the Resource Centres and assess the qualitative impacts of interventions. Another area which would require further investigation is community-related issues. Additional research at this level would allow the development of more definitive statements concerning the partnerships and relationships developed with community organizations.

A third area for possible investigation concerns the data collection and data reporting systems in place. All Resources Centres studied collect the information necessary to submit quarterly reports to MCSS. However, inconsistencies in the presentation of the reports could lead to misinterpretations of the information presented.

In addition, further investigation concerning the appropriateness of the data collection systems in place may be warranted. Specifically, it would be important to assess whether the data collection mechanisms in place in the smaller RCs (i.e. manual) are sufficient or whether electronic data collection systems comparable to those used in larger RCs is required. The larger RCs each use different data collection systems. Whether they should all use the same system, and collect and report information consistently might be an additional area for investigation.

The information collected through the conduct of this evaluation demonstrates that there is a need for more formal mechanisms to monitor the training needs of staff. As a starting point, it would be important to conduct further research into assessing the status in the training of staff and identifying specific areas where training might be required.

Lastly, it might be worthwhile to conduct further investigation into the cost-effectiveness of the operations of the smaller, more remote RCs. Specifically, a comparison of the costs and benefits involved in maintaining those RCs opened and of those that would be involved in providing outreach services in some locations would be useful.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

HRDC

The Formative phase 1 evaluation was developed to assess the Resource Centre ability to co-ordinate the delivery of programs and services for Social Service Recipients provided by the Federal, Provincial, Municipal governments and by community organizations. The evaluation indicated that the activities and services acted on by the centres met the majority of jobLink objectives.

The jobLink Resource Centres provided service to Social Assistance Recipients who might not other wise have received employment services as quickly. Services provided by the centres included orientation, intake, assessment, employment planning, training for employment and self help-employment opportunities. Positive inroads were made in developing partnerships, municipalities, MCSS, and HRDC were the common bond in any partnering. Each partner provided a different mix of supports, from funding and technology to access to programs and counselling services.

The evaluation was limited in outcome measurement. Establishment of service objectives and tracking mechanisms at the outset of jobLink Resource Centres would have facilitated measurement of success with regard to volumes and types of clients served. It would also have encouraged and simplified follow up with clients as part of the evaluation.

The "lessons learned" section of the evaluation summarizes the critical issues for any future attempts at Federal and Provincial co-ordination. Adequate time for planning, to identify community needs and service gaps. Community involvement in development, implementation and operational phases. The evaluation makes the point that Resource Centres that maintained ongoing community discussion through its advisory committees had greater acceptance within the community as a service delivery organization. Co-location was viewed as a preferred method provided that it was managed effectively. Timeliness and accuracy of services, along with information provided to clients was greatly improved by co-locating staff. To increase the knowledge transfer seems to be the key to a more successful integration. Cross training of staff appears to be an issue requiring further study in order to maximize the benefits of co-locating different organizations.

The evaluation discussed issues and barriers that limited implementation but it does appear that the six centres were successful in meeting client needs. Resource Centres it would seem did provide a valuable resource to the community.

MCSS (Windsor)

Question 1: To what extent did the evaluation show that the Resource Centre was meeting the Ministry's objectives within the first 12 months of operations?

The Windsor Resource Centre was implemented within the guidelines and the plan developed by the community planning and implementation committee. The objectives as outlined by the Ministry and the success of the achievement of these variables were as follows:

Individuals

Improve access to all employment and training programs.

The Resource Centre was developed with the sole intention to serve social assistance recipients. This did not negate the opportunity for other to use the service but the primary target group as SARs. Through the resource centre social assistance recipients were able to access additional services in a variety of areas and through a more coordinated efforts of agencies involved.

Program services such as coordinated intake which had been in place previously were maintained with the development of the Resource Centre. Purchase of Service agreements were also maintained.

All community agencies were advised of the availability of space within the Resource Centre and the opportunity to participate.

Access to training was improved through the location of the Resource Centre within the HRDC office. Two staff members from HRDC also worked within the Resource Centre and reported functionally to the RC supervisor.

The level of earnings and the ability of the recipients to secure and sustain employment was increased as noted in the caseload reductions. This was through the efforts of the staff in the Resource Centre in combination with the

opening of the employment within the city as a direct result of the development of the Casino.

Systems managers/funders and service providers

Access to employment related information was increased through the access to the federal Jobbank Kiosks and the Labour Market Information. However, the intent and the plan to provide access to the information through member agencies linked into the data bases through computers on a WAN did not come to fruition due to lack of funding.

The core service outlined for the resource centre were implemented. The components as outlined, from needs analysis to support functions, ere all implemented. A resource inventory was developed and continues to be updated by the municipality every six months. Client access to self-help tools is provided at the front-end

The development of the "review of services" did no occur at the time of the development of the implementation plan. A consultant was hired by the municipality to complete this review. However, the review was an incomplete report due to the lack of response from the service providers within the community. The Ministry and the consultant attempted through a variety of letters and phone calls to have the information gathering tool returned to the consultant. Repeated efforts through second mail-outs and phone calls did not help. As a result, in information obtained tended to be anecdotal.

At the time of implementation of the Resource Centre the Federal government was addressing its delivery of service. It was undergoing its own re-organization and agencies were being impacted by funding reductions. The Ontario government had just changed and the direction was uncertain but noted in the Work for Welfare approach to social assistance as outlined in the Common Sense Document.

The Ministry continued to develop a new client data base within the Resource Centre that has now become the Ontario Works database. The jobbank kiosks were distributed by HRDC within the plan developed with some exceptions.

The area office of the Ministry continued to meet with the implementation committee until after the election in early June. The Election set a new tone in the Province with the understanding that work for welfare was to be a new direction for social assistance, jobLink planning on a provincial level slowed

down and it did on a local level as well. However, funding and implementation of the core service within the resource centre continued.

The three partners continued to meet sporadically for the next several months but the discussion focused to the centre itself and its functioning within the HRDC office as well as the direction of the HRDC re-organization. The pending implementation of Work for Welfare a bringing a new direction to the system.

The Ministry also attempted to look at the development of a Wide Area Network to link the three service funders and providers into a network but the HRDC office was involved in their own automated system and using the Internet and therefore the project did not proceed.

The Ministry continued to develop an automated client database within the Resource Centre for the next several months, that assisted in the development of the Ontario Works Software.

Question 2: Does the evaluation report any significant implementation success or issues, and if so, what are the success or issues?

The report identifies that the community partners worked very hard to develop the plan in a very short time frame. The development of the plan was seen as a large success.

The members of the planning committee represented sectors of the community and it was expected that their role was to report back to the various sectors. This is not occur due to the time commitment of the individuals in the developing the plan. However, it was the expectation that these members spoke on behalf of the constituents.

The development of the advisory committee was planned with the term of reference finalized. However the direction of the Social Assistance program in regards to the outcomes of the Provincial election delayed the implementation of the committee. Although no formal notice was sent out there was only one response to the Ministry in this regard and none to the City of Windsor. The City of Windsor during 1996 continued to hold their quarterly information sessions with the community agencies and no one raised this concern.

In hindsight the partners could have been more direct in advising the community about the delay in implementing the Advisory Committee.

At the time of the Resource Centre Process Evaluation more was known about the intent of the Work for Welfare program and the decision to proceed with the

implementation of the advisory committee was not followed up by any of the three partners. Some community partners were actively involved in the maintaining their own programs in light of the federal cut to programs. It was also known that other than the resource centre there was no additional money for other community partners. Planning for jobLink had ceased at the provincial and federal levels.

The implementation of the Resource Centre was very positive. It managed to centralized a number of service for social assistance clients. It also created a natural linkage between HRDC and the municipality. Its front-end self-help services were very positive.

The Area office continued to work with the implementation committee through the development of the plan and the opening the Centre officially on January 1, 1995. The committee continued to meet until the end of June 1995. The core Committee continued to meet but the withdrawal of the MET reps left only HRDC, the City of Windsor and MCSS.

Question 3: Are there any outstanding successes or issues on which the evaluation does not report or insufficiently reports?

The report makes passing references to the changes that were impacting on the system. While the report makes reference to the agencies not responding to participating in the Resource Centre as they were looking for their own jobLink funding there was no additional funding. The changes that HRDC were undergoing and the funding of their community partners was also not clearly enunciated and/or its impact on the community. HRDC was also deeply involved with the Provincial government around the development of the Local Training and Advisory Boards. The report also make no assessment of the Work for Welfare implication on the implementation of the jobLink initiative. The lack of federal/provincial direction after the establishment of the programs was also not considered as part of the review. For example, the common assessment strategy which was seen as a strong component of the jobLink Resource Centre system was never finished. While an attempt was undertaken at the local level it to develop such a tool it too remained unfinished after a solid start by the community.

Question 4: Does the Area Office see any implications arising from the evaluation for a proposed follow-up evaluation on employment resource centre clients?

No. The clients have benefited directly from the resource centre and the commitment of the staff to provide a high level of service. The new direction

however, may solicit response from recipients that are not relevant to the old process. This hopefully would not negate the positive outcomes that were seen in the Resource Centre.

General Comments

The time-frame for implementation of the Resource Centre did not allow for an efficient process within the community. Several components could have been done more efficiently. Had the strategic direction of the major partners remained stable for longer periods, the implementation could have been more effective. However, the new direction, while incorporating components of the old, has changed several components of the program. The reliance on assessments and full scale involvement with the clients has now lessened with the implementation of Ontario Works.

The current system relies on components of the Resource Centre that fit into the Ontario Works programs, access to front-end, self-help services and equipment; listing of community services, and community involvement. Positive lessons learned from the development of and tne planning for jobLink Resource Centres and assisted municipalities in the development of their Ontario Works Business Plans. However, the interplay of competing factors and the new strategic directions by the main partners were not reviewed in the context of the finalized processes and the completion of the various components.

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present the findings from the process evaluation of the Resource Centres (RCs) located in Windsor and Sudbury. The overall purpose of the process evaluation of the RCs was to review the administrative arrangements established during Resource Centre implementation, including the partnerships established and the various service delivery models used. The focus was on those components which are central to the coordination of programs and services offered in the community by all levels of government, the private sector and agencies. The federal objectives for the study were the following:

- to identify various RC administrative arrangements;
- to identify alternative models of client service;
- to assess the utilization of, and linkages to, federal government labour market services within the Resource Centres; and
- to identify issues critical for future discussions of co-location and coordination of federal and provincial service delivery.

The provincial objectives for the evaluation were the following:

- to identify various activities and services provided to Social Assistance Recipients (SARs); and
- to identify ways of reducing overlap in delivering government services.

The first section of this chapter presents the context in which Resource Centres were developed in Ontario. The second section presents the structure of the report.

1.1 Context

The jobLink Ontario Initiative, within which the Resource Centres were established, was developed at a time when Ontario was reforming its Social Assistance System. The Ontario government outlined its reform directions in July, 1993 in a public paper entitled Turning Point: New Support Programs for *People with Low Incomes*. JobLink Ontario was central to Ontario's social assistance reform agenda. It was going to provide supports and services to help Social Assistance Recipients (SARs) enter or re-enter the labour market.

During the development of Ontario's jobLink Initiative, the Federal Government announced the Strategic Initiatives Program (SI) in its February, 1994 budget. The SI Program was introduced as a five-year federal-provincial cost-shared program to test innovative ideas about social security reform. Through SI, the Government of Canada earmarked funding of $25 M for Ontario's jobLink Initiative, a portion of which supported the establishment of Resource Centres. In early 1995, the Governments of Canada and Ontario signed a Cooperation Agreement which detailed this financial contribution and support for the implementation of jobLink and its components for the fiscal year 1994/95.

The principles guiding jobLink Ontario were the following:

- encouragement of self-directed activities that lead to a job and independence;
- broad and effective partnerships to include governments, consumers, advocates, employers, labour, education and community agencies;
- consumer-driven services, with trained support staff;
- individualized services (consumers to receive only the level of service they require); and
- clear and measurable accountability for all partners.

JobLink Ontario was to focus on individuals' employment needs and expected improvements in employment, employment skills, income, and job readiness; access to labour market and education/training programs; employment equity; consumer satisfaction; reduced barriers between programs; rationalization of services; and reduced dependency on social assistance. Eligible participants were individuals in receipt of social assistance who were ready to make the

transition to the workforce, and people at risk of long-term dependence on public services.

It was envisioned that services would be organized through Resource Centres. Services were to include individual employability assessments and employment planning; approved programs; and supports to individuals. The first phase of implementation included different areas of the province to allow for different modes of delivery. Resource Centres were not to duplicate existing services but enhance, coordinate, and build on existing ones.

Resource Centres are multi-service centres that provide information about training, education, and employment opportunities in local communities. They must provide information and support to many individuals. To do this, a wide array of self-help tools, some of them automated, were developed. A Resource Centre "prototype" is presented in Exhibit 1.1.

Exhibit 1.1
Resource Centre "Prototype"

Orientation, intake and minimal planning
- decentralized
- market where people are

Assessment and employment planning
- individualized assessment portfolio
- self-help tests
- worker support

Information
- interactive resource library
- self-help tools
- like to local opportunities

Training for employment
Self-employment opportunities

The overall purpose of jobLink Ontario was to improve and extend local linkages, close the existing gaps, reduce duplication and provide a set of services that residents of Ontario would find easier to use.

Resource Centre sites were identified through local jobLink Ontario planning processes. Communities were to develop local implementation plans that would describe how supports, services and programs would be implemented and organized to meet the outcomes and performance targets that would be established for jobLink Ontario. The main purpose of the plan was to describe how existing services would be modified and, if necessary, augmented to meet

jobLink Ontario objectives. Communities had to ensure that consumers and the major program providers participated in the planning process in order to develop local implementation plans.

Through the community planning process, communities were to review existing services against jobLink Ontario design and within the context of labour market conditions and identify, based on this review:

- the services that were working well and those in need of reconfiguration;
- program and service delivery changes required to implement jobLink Ontario;
- the strategies and resources needed to implement jobLink Ontario;
- a statement of outcomes and expected targets; and
- recommendations for labour market programs for consideration by appropriate system managers.

Organizations interested in becoming the accountability centre for the Resource Centre were asked to submit proposals to be reviewed and assessed by both the federal and provincial governments against a set of criteria, including the potential to improve access to client services, cost, demonstrated community commitment and comprehensiveness.

The approach taken by each community differs based on needs. The federal (HRDC - Human Resources Development Canada) and provincial (MCSS - Ministry of Community and Social Services) governments, although they provide funding for the RCs, may or may not be involved as delivery agents.

In 1995, Ontario changed government. While jobLink Ontario was eliminated, Resource Centres remained in place. However, the uncertainty surrounding the future of the RCs in the new provincial context had impacts on the development of the Resource Centres in their first year of operations. These impacts are discussed in the findings section of this report whenever relevant.

1.2 Structure of this Report

Chapter 2 of the report presents the methodology that was used to conduct the process evaluation of the Resource Centres. Chapter 3 presents the findings related to the Windsor Resource Centre and Chapter 4 presents those related to the Sudbury RCs. Chapter 5 presents the lessons learned throughout the

implementation and operations of the RCs and Chapter 6 presents the overall conclusions for the study, including the identification of areas for further research.

2.0 Methodology

This section describes the methodology that was used to conduct this evaluation, together with its limitations. The key evaluation questions, presented in **Appendix A**, provided the framework for inquiry.

2.1 Sources of Information

Three main sources of information were used to address the key evaluation questions:

- review of background information;
- site visits; and
- follow-up research.

A total of 28 interviews (12 in Windsor and 16 in Sudbury) were conducted during the site visits and follow-up research.

2.1.1 Review of Background Information

The first phase of information collection involved reviewing a variety of documents provided by the Project Authority regarding the overall jobLink Initiative, including the identification of the eleven sites and the proposals from organizations wishing to become a jobLink RC. During this phase, site-specific information was also reviewed. These documents provided background information for both the Windsor and Sudbury RCs.

Based on this review, two interview guides (see **Appendix B**) were prepared for use during the site visits to Windsor and Sudbury.

2.1.2 Site Visits

The site visits to Windsor and Sudbury were conducted during the week of March 11, 1996. Lists of potential interviewees were provided by the Project Authority. RC managers were contacted to make arrangements for the site visits.

Windsor

The Windsor RC was visited on March 11th and 12th. During that time, a total of six in-person interviews were conducted with representatives from MCSS, HRDC, the City of Windsor Social Services Department as well as RC staff. A variety of information and documentation was also collected (e.g., RC business plans, budgets, staff job descriptions, statistical reports, client satisfaction questionnaires, expense reports, quarterly reports submitted to MCSS). As well, a tour of the RC facility was provided during the visit.

Sudbury

The Sudbury site visit was conducted on March 13th, 14th and 15th. The first half day of the visit was spent touring the Sudbury Central facility, conducting an interview with the RC coordinator and gathering various documents (e.g., the various forms used in the Resource Centre, a copy of a partnership agreement, an organizational chart, job descriptions, print-outs of the jobLink database computer screens, minutes from management committee meetings, the "Employment Services Handbook" for the municipality of Sudbury).

The second day was spent visiting the Sudbury East central office as well as one of its outreach offices. The Sudbury East RC manager, a member of the accountability centre's committee and one counsellor were interviewed. Documents were also collected (e.g., the Community Action Network Réseau Action Communautaire (CANRAC, Sudbury East's accountability centre) 1994-95 report, statistical information, job descriptions, copies of various forms used by counsellors).

The third day was spent in Sudbury Central. A total of four interviews were conducted with staff and partner representatives.

2.1.3 Follow-up Research

During this phase of the study, the documents collected during the site visits were reviewed and analyzed. Telephone interviews were conducted with individuals who could not be interviewed in-person during the site visits (6 for Windsor, 8 for Sudbury). Additional interviews were conducted with RC staff and managers, and community agency representatives. Individuals with whom in-person interviews could not be completed during the site visits were also contacted for follow-up interviews (3 for Windsor, 2 for Sudbury).

We attempted to re-schedule previously cancelled interviews with two individuals, including the MCSS representative for the region of Sudbury, but were not successful.

2.2 Limitations

The major limitation to this study is the short time frame within which it had to be conducted. The short time frame meant that not all individuals who could have been consulted during the study were consulted. For example, a very small number of interviews were conducted with representatives from community agencies. These agencies are important informal players that could have provided valuable insight into the RC implementation and development process. Similarly, only a small number of RC staff from the larger centres were interviewed. This means that the findings presented in this report are based on the opinions of a sample of staff and community agencies, and are not representative of all views.

The strike at the provincial level also had an impact on the conduct of this study. For example, it has been very difficult to get in touch with the MCSS representative in Sudbury while the strike was on. Attempts to contact the individual were also made once the strike was over. Even though messages were left and a third party was used to contact the individual, an interview could not be conducted with him.

Lastly, RC clients were not consulted during the conduct of this study. The lack of consultation with this group limits the statements that can be made about the extent to which the RCs are responding to client needs, about service quality and, to some extent, about the extent of duplications and gaps in services in the respective communities.

3.0 Findings - Windsor

This chapter of the report presents the findings from the research and field work conducted for the Windsor Resource Centre (RC).

3.1 Contractual Agreements

This section of the report presents the findings pertaining to the various partners involved in the design and delivery of the Windsor Resource Centre.

3.1.1 Operating Partners

There are three main partners involved to varying extent in the operations of the Windsor RC. These partners, as well as their respective roles with the RC, are presented in Exhibit 3.1.

Exhibit 3.1
Operating Partners

Resource Centre	Operating Partners	Roles and Responsibilities
Windsor	MCSS	Funding agent
	City of Windsor	Accountability agent. Provides primary access to counselling services and funding for SAR programs.
	Human Resources Development Canada	Provides technological tools and LAN support, including job bank kiosks. Provides access to an on-site HRDC counsellor and HRDC SAR programs.

The Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) provides the core funding for the RC, as well as access to MCSS programming. MCSS is the ultimate financial manager for the expenditure of RC resources. It provided overall leadership throughout the strategic planning process but is not involved in direct service delivery. The main role of HRDC as an operating partner is to provide funding to the RC (through MCSS). HRDC also provides a significant amount of technical support including LAN administration, access to labour

market information (LMI) and job bank kiosks. As well, HRDC contributes one in-kind on-site employment counsellor. Overall accountability, day-to-day management and delivery of the Windsor RC is provided by the City of Windsor. The City has been responsible for overall implementation of the RC's service delivery operations and it manages the majority of the staff physically located within the RC.

In general, the roles of the three operating partners are clear and distinct. However, the management committee, comprised of representatives from the three operating partners, has not met on a regular basis. The committee was originally established as a means to share information, participate in strategic planning and address overall strategic issues. The City of Windsor currently runs the RC with minimal input at a strategic level above and beyond technical and financial support from the other two partners.

3.1.2 Other Partners

There are a number of informal partners who are involved to varying extent with the RC. The Youth Employment Centre and the Unemployed Help Centre receive funding from the RC and support the delivery of RC services.

A Youth Employment Centre counsellor is on-site one day per week under a service delivery contract. This counsellor provides information sessions, employment-related counseling and referral services to young people on Social Assistance. The Unemployed Help Centre also provides vocational counseling off-site to severely employment-challenged SARs under a service delivery contract. RC clients are referred to the Unemployed Help Centre when it has been determined that they require more in-depth or long-term counseling than can be provided by the RC. In addition, a service delivery contract has been developed with a local agency to provide in-depth assessment services for certain RC clients.

The roles and responsibilities of these other partners are clearly outlined in their service delivery agreements. The services provided within the framework of the RC (jobLink) funding are clear.

3.1.3 Advisory Committee

The proposal to establish the Windsor RC included the intention to develop and consult with a local advisory committee. This committee was to include representatives from the original Implementation Planning Committee (i.e. the City of Windsor, HRDC, MCSS and community agency representatives). The purpose of this committee was to provide on-going feedback to the RC. While a list of participants for the committee has been established, the committee has never met. Various interviewees expressed frustration regarding the lack of input they have been able to provide into the on-going operations of the RC, particularly with respect to the establishment of an operating advisory committee. No alternative mechanism for this committee is currently in place. However, it is anticipated that the advisory committee will become established and operational in the near future, as most of the issues surrounding the establishment of the RC have been addressed.

3.2 Organizational Structure

This section of the report presents the model adopted for the RC in Windsor, as well as the roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships of the staff dedicated to the delivery of services.

3.2.1 Structure

The Windsor RC is located in the same building as the local CEC, but on a separate floor. The entire Employment Services unit of the City of Windsor moved into the RC, which had been (pre-jobLink) operating as a resource centre consolidating the services of the Municipal/First Nations Employment program, and HRDC programs and services for SARs. There are currently no other partners permanently co-located within the RC. As discussed in section 3.1.2, service delivery contracts are being used to help forge stronger service delivery links between the RC and certain community agencies.

There are currently sixteen staff dedicated to providing RC services. The staff composition includes 1 supervisor, 1 receptionist, 2 clerks, 8 employment support caseworkers, 3 job developers, and 1 HRDC counsellor. The roles and responsibilities of the various RC staff are summarized in Exhibit 3.2.

Exhibit 3.2
RC Structure (in March, 1996)

Characteristics	Number of Staff	Roles and Responsibilities
One office located in the same building as the CEC (HRDC). Co-location of City of Windsor staff and one HRDC counsellor. On-site part-time programming provided by the Youth Employment Centre. Links to the community through referral and some funding activities (e.g. Unemployed Help Centre) Total staff: 16	1 supervisor	Manages RC (i.e. staff and administration), liaise with HRDC and Community agencies.
	1 receptionist	Distributes and collects registration and survey forms, enters data into client tracking system, schedules interviews with counsellor, answers telephone and helps direct clients.
	2 clerks	Secretarial and administrative duties.
	8 employment case workers	Client assistance at point of entry, client consultation, client needs assessment, plans and goals, client assistance and referrals. Promotion to employee and client follow-up.
	3 job developers	Client consultation, client needs assessment, client assistance, contact with employers and referral of clients.
	1 HRDC employment counsellor	In-depth client assessment, client referral as well as access to HRDC programs, training and support to other RC counsellors.

Despite their different job descriptions, there is little distinction between the roles of the employment support caseworkers and the job developers. Both provide up-front services directly to clients as they walk into the RC on a rotating basis. The staff help direct clients, answer their questions, assist them in the utilization of the various technology and equipment provided in the front area, review resumes, and provide advice and suggest tactics or ideas to address the clients' needs. The up-front worker may also suggest that the client book an appointment with a counsellor, if the client's needs are not readily met by a short consultation with the up-front worker.

Originally, HRDC was to provide more detailed assessment services to clients, counseling support to the City's counsellors by means of case conferencing, as

well as access to counseling training and tools to help develop clients' skills. The HRDC counselling role was also to provide on-site access to HRDC funded/ supported programs. Originally, two HRDC counsellors were intended to maintain client caseloads and be part of the mainstream counselling team who would see clients on a one-on-one basis as they requested assistance through the front-end process. As well, the HRDC counsellors were originally anticipated to provide support to the other counsellors should it be determined that a client required further assessment. Changes to the service delivery arrangements between HRDC and the City have resulted in only one HRDC counsellor being on site. This counsellor does not maintain a client caseload. She provides on-going support to the other counsellors with respect to access to HRDC programming information/registration, and to a variety of counselling tools and training to which they did not previously have access. The HRDC counsellor participates in case conferencing with the other counsellors and their clients. However, the role of the HRDC counsellor has become much more focussed on programming and consulting rather than hands-on counseling.

The changes to the number as well as the role of the HRDC counsellors have been attributed to the downsizing that HRDC is currently undergoing and the subsequent need for the counsellors within the CEC. This has created uncertainty regarding how long the existing HRDC counsellor will remain on-site and therefore creates difficulties in managing client caseloads among counsellors. RC management and staff are concerned that the loss of the on-site HRDC counsellor will impact the services provided to clients, as well as the training and support provided to staff. It was also felt that this loss may have negative impacts on the partnership arrangement between HRDC and the City of Windsor, such as reduced communication and a duplication of efforts dealing with SAR clients.

It should be noted that all SAR clients who choose to avail themselves of HRDC services can do so by going directly to the CEC.

Within the RC, all municipal staff report directly to the supervisor (i.e., all staff but the HRDC counsellor). The HRDC counsellor only reports functionally to the supervisor and continues to report to HRDC for leave and pay-related issues. This reporting structure appears to be working very well. No comments were provided with respect to problems or issues which could have impeded the smooth co-working of staff from these two organizations.

3.2.2 Skills Set

All RC staff are full-time employees and are technically generalists (i.e. provide a variety of employment counseling services, from initial assessment through planning to examining options and contacts with employers). However, some staff have become more knowledgeable, through self-training, in particular, technical areas such as systems. There are currently no volunteers participating in any capacity within the RC.

Staff have reportedly not been trained significantly, particularly with respect to computer technology. Some RC staff are not computer literate and are therefore unable to fully benefit from the technology available to them within the RC. Training is provided from self-taught staff to other staff. This approach may have an impact on the consistency and timeliness of service delivery.

All counseling staff within the RC are experienced employment counsellors, and possess the basic skills necessary to provide employment counseling and referral services to clients. A variety of interviewees mentioned that the clients currently served by the RC are "hard core" SARs. The SAR caseload has decreased significantly over the past two years in Windsor due to a favourable economy. The current SAR caseload in Windsor is estimated to be composed of approximately 75% severely employment-challenged individuals. These clients usually face multiple barriers to employment, including personal or social problems, which compound any lack of skill or experience. In many cases, there is nothing that the RC employment counsellor can do to help these clients until these other barriers have been addressed. The RC counsellors refer these clients to specialized community agencies.

However, funding cuts have severely limited the ability of many community agencies to absorb these clients. Funding is often based on historical results, and a community agency may be reluctant to take on a difficult client because of the potentially negative impact if these clients do not readily find employment. As well, positions in various programs are also limited by funding availability. If the client cannot access services from the community agencies, they come back to the RC, and the cycle begins once more. Co-location of community agencies able to handle "hard-core" SARs would streamline and potentially improve the services provided to these clients. While an offer of co-location has been extended to all community agencies, there has been a reluctance on agencies' part to accept the offer for fear that co-location would lead to the loss of their core funding.

In order to help clients to the greatest extent possible, RC counsellors are now doing more detailed assessments and in-depth counselling than they were previously. Cross-training between the HRDC counsellor and the other RC

counsellors has been viewed as very positive in this regard. However, there continues to be a lack of in-depth assessment tools to help identify clients' needs. Interviewees discussed the need for an assessment tool common to the province to ensure that all SARs receive high quality counselling services.

3.3 Services and Activities Provided at the RC

The receptionist is clearly visible in the RC's front-area, a bright, clean space with large tables and many chairs. This area includes a big screen TV, VCR, bookshelves of pamphlets and information, four job banks/LMI kiosks, a fax machine, photocopier, and four workstations with computers and telephones. One of the RC counsellors is always available to discuss or help direct clients to the available services. If the up-front worker is busy with another client, the receptionist can introduce new clients to the RC and explain that the up-front worker will help them as soon as possible.

First-time clients are asked to complete a registration form. This form provides background information about the client, including name, address, source of income, any previous experience with the RC, their status in the family, as well as the types of services they are seeking. The client is asked to sign a "consent to obtain or release information" form, which allows RC staff (both City of Windsor as well as HRDC) to share information regarding the client's employment issues with relevant individuals. This form allows seamless access to client information by both the City of Windsor as well as HRDC. The information is entered into a Client Tracking System (CTS) adapted from the City of Windsor for use by the Resource Centre. While this system is not linked to HRDC's tracking system (NESS), the HRDC counsellor has access to the RC's CTS and to all client files.

Previously, clients had to be referred to the RC by their income maintenance worker. However, it was felt that the referral process was burdensome and was abandoned. Anyone, whether a SAR or not, can access the front-end services and meet with the front-end worker on duty. When needed, a one-on-one appointment with a City of Windsor counsellor is booked by the receptionist if the client is a SAR or has been a SAR within the past year. Other clients are referred to the appropriate agency by the front-end worker. Clients can also self-refer using the available inventory of community agencies as a reference guide.

The various services offered by the City's counsellors include the following:

- employability assessment;
- employment planning;

- ongoing case management;
- counselling;
- resume preparation; and
- job search assistance (e.g., helping clients prepare their resume and access the job banks, matching them with employers who call with job offers).

Clients are usually asked to complete a self-assessment form prior to meeting a counsellor. The first visit with a counsellor usually involves the identification of clients' needs and barriers, using the completed self-assessment form as a guide. The counsellor presents the various options, programs or services which may be of interest to the client. An opportunity plan is usually developed during the first or second visit with the counsellor. The plan identifies the client's short- and long-term goals as well as the various actions required to overcome existing barriers and achieve the goals. Clients' training needs are determined during this process, and are generally identified by the client and counsellor together, with the objective of meeting the client's employment-related goals. The counsellor may refer the client to various programs or services, including employment search, counselling/training or skills programs available through the City, HRDC, MCSS or within the community.

If the client is referred to HRDC, he or she can either meet the HRDC counsellor or the City counsellor meets with the HRDC counsellor on the client's behalf, and the required information and paperwork is transferred and prepared.

The types of services/programs offered by the HRDC counsellor include the following:

- formalized education and vocational testing;
- employer liaison;
- employment contract;
- program accommodation and equipment;
- apprenticeship opportunities;
- program/project options; and
- job creation fund.

Client files as well as the Client Tracking System are updated regularly. Counsellors are responsible for monitoring client activities, usually every three months. Clients who use RC services, either up-front services or counselling services, are asked to complete a brief evaluation questionnaire, including closed- and open-ended questions, after each visit/use. This information is compiled and used to track usage and satisfaction with the services provided by the RC.

3.3.1 Integration of Services Within the RC

The RC has integrated a number of services from both HRDC and the City of Windsor. There are four job banks with labour market information (LMI) on-site within the RC, each containing the same information as all other job bank kiosks provided and supported by HRDC (e.g, want ads, job postings, top areas where people have found work within a specified period of time). HRDC is currently working with the RC to link the existing desktop computers with the job banks/LMI for quick reference and for matching clients from the jobLink system with employers in the job banks. Significant integration of services has been achieved through the cross-training of all RC staff. The HRDC counsellor has access to the RC's client tracking system (information is only entered into NESS if the client receives counselling), and has been provided with a counsellor identification number so that all client information is readily accessible. The City of Windsor counsellors have developed their understanding of the programs and services offered by HRDC, as well as an appreciation of the specific types of counselling support and tools that they are able to access, through the HRDC on-site counsellor.

Interviewees felt that the RC does provide an integrated system for access to primary information regarding the programs and services available within the community. However, with no on-site partners other than HRDC and the City, on site integration of programs and services has been limited. A key factor identified as having facilitated overall integration was the community consultations/ committee structure in place at the outset of the RC planning process. It was felt that the community had been solicited for their input in the initial consultations regarding jobLink and that key players (including HRDC and the City of Windsor) had been invited to contribute in the early planning stages as well. At the staff level, the team work developed between HRDC and the City of Windsor staff was a result of mutual respect and a desire to learn from one another. Staff have been involved in both facilities and programming design issues, and have become much more knowledgeable of the counselling tools, services and programs that they can offer to their clients than they were in the beginning.

Various interviewees felt that co-location between HRDC and the City of Windsor would have developed of its own accord. The availability of new funding caused potential partners to draw back and protect their own programs in the hopes that they would receive new funding under the jobLink initiative, which may have hindered the integration process. Another factor which hindered the overall integration of services within the RC was the tight time frame required for the design and planning of the RC. Despite the fact that community agencies were consulted early in the process, they were not consulted again until the final plan had been developed and it was too late to make changes.

3.3.2 Partnerships and Relationships with the Community

Partnerships with community groups have not really changed with the implementation of the RC. Community agencies, HRDC, and the City still meet twice per year to outline services delivered within the community for the maintenance of a community-wide programs and services inventory.

The proposal for the Windsor RC identified one of the key activities to be undertaken early in the RC implementation as a study to identify service duplications and gaps within the community. A study on program activities was conducted, but formal identification of gaps or how best to address them has not been undertaken. The findings presented in the study regarding duplications with, or gaps in, other services offered in the community are anecdotal.

Interviewees were of the opinion that there are continued duplications of services within the community, but not excessive ones. It was suggested that each service provider, the RC included, offers services in a slightly different package. For example, employment counselling services are provided by the RC, and employment counselling services specifically targeted for individuals with visual impairments are offered through the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. These targeted community agencies are now starting to visit the RC and provide their clients with access to a greater variety of services. As well, these visits provide the opportunity for RC staff to enhance their sensitivities to unique employment barriers faced by some individuals, thus enabling them to better serve a variety of clients.

In general, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the RC has had an impact on filling gaps in services since gaps have not been clearly identified.

3.3.3 Client Volumes and Characteristics

While the Windsor RC is primarily intended to provide programs and services to SARs, other, non-SAR clients have access to both front-end services as well as the counsellors in the front area. Statistics have only recently been compiled regarding non-SAR usage of the RC. The statistics presented in Exhibit 3.3 only include the SAR population involved with the RC. The figures in this exhibit come from the September and December quarterly reports submitted to MCSS. These reports do not include references to the number of clients who belong to equity groups (e.g., Aboriginals, visible minorities, persons with disabilities).

3.4 Resource Centre Implementation and Objectives

This section of the report presents a description of the service model developed and implemented for the RC in Windsor, and factors which impacted the implementation of the model. The objectives originally outlined for the Windsor RC are discussed, as well as the findings related to the achievement of these objectives.

Exhibit 3.3
Client Activity Second (ending September) and Third (ending December) Quarters, 1995

Resource Centre	Total Clients Served	Clients Closed To			Total Clients Closed
		Training/ Education	Employment	Other	
Windsor					
1st quarter	1523	97	152	318	567
2nd quarter	1475	57	115	286	458
Total	**2041**	**154**	**267**	**604**	**1025**

3.4.1 Service Model Used

The Windsor RC structure involves co-location of the Employment Services Unit of the City of Windsor and one HRDC staff. Partner organizations in the community act as satellites for referrals. An Essex County employment counsellor is located on-site (but not funded through jobLink) and provides

employment services to her clients, referred by the Essex County income maintenance workers.

Some of the key factors identified by interviewees as having had a positive impact on the implementation of the model include the following:

- the co-location initiative had been initiated prior to the planning for the RC so buy-in from the participating parties existed;
- the original committee involved community representatives;
- staff were allowed to organize the way to best meet operating requirements; and
- good working relationships among the three levels of government were developed during the planning phase, which enhanced implementation.

No other models were attempted for the Windsor site.

3.4.2 Objectives Achievement

The proposal and planning documents for the Windsor RC identify the following as service objectives:

> *"to promote independence and encourage people to move towards their fullest potential. From the onset, individuals must be involved in their own independence plans, which may or may not include work. Independence plans need to be flexible and need to incorporate the requirements of significant others. Clients differ in their level of functioning, and this must be reflected in the individual plans. Independence strategies will be as different as the people themselves."*

The related sub-objectives are the following:

- "to allow for strategies based on the individual's level of functioning that, from the onset, involves clients in their own problem-solving";
- "to encourage self-application and self-assessment with the service organization acting in a facilitator role. Intrusive methods are to be avoided so as to encourage self-esteem and independent functioning";

- "to provide an integrated process for critical independence supports, such as child care, transportation, spousal support and life skills using a one-stop approach";

- "to provide a highly visible entry point where people on social assistance can get information on employment, training, and supports available locally";

- "to provide accessibility to a full range of social assistance recipients who are job-ready, nearly job-ready or who can direct themselves in employment planning with some staff assistance";

- "to provide employment support funds to supplement existing benefits where they are not adequate or available, and track information accordingly";

- "to display proper authorized signage, indicating the site as a jobLink Ontario Resource Centre";

- "to support and receive advice from the jobLink Ontario Advisory Committee"; and

- "to amend programs and services through the jobLink Ontario Resource Centre in response to information provided by the Advisory Committee and the (information) available through service monitoring".

The RC has implemented activities and services to meet the majority of the objectives outlined in the implementation proposal. The RC has been able to implement a permanent one-stop approach for access to City of Windsor and HRDC employment services for SARs, but not for other services (other partners only provide services on-site part-time or provide them off-site).

Programs and services have not really been amended in response to any jobLink type committee or community advisory committee, as outlined in the proposal. The advisory committee has never met in this capacity. RC programming has been modified during the implementation phase as a result of RC staff feedback. As well, counselling services provided by City of Windsor counsellors have been enhanced through the cross-training provided by the HRDC counsellor.

Based on a preliminary cursory review of client survey information, most clients report that they are either satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided by the RC. However, it should be noted that no clients were consulted during the field work for this assignment. There is some belief within the community that

clients may be linking income support with RC services and therefore be reluctant to criticize the "hand that feeds them".

There are two primary constraints that limit the achievement of the stated objectives for the RC. The first is financial. It was reported that co-location of community partners has not occurred due to an uncertainty concerning funding sources and amounts. As well, rumours surrounding the provincial government's Workfare program have made some organizations nervous as to their role in serving the unemployed population. These organizations are reportedly more protective of their core funding and less likely to engage in activities which may reduce their chances of securing funding in the future.

The second constraint is related to communications. The lack of follow-up with the community advisory committee has left various stakeholders/partners, including community agencies and public sector participants, with a feeling of vagueness. The original planning and implementation committees worked very hard to develop a proposal in a very short time frame. Community agencies were involved and told that they would be kept abreast of progress. It was reported that this did not materialize due to time restrictions. The advisory committee has never met and the various partners or potential partners may not feel that their input is desired. It was suggested that clear communication of anticipated level of input/consultation, as well as identification of roles and responsibilities within the overall service design and delivery framework for the community, would have ensured that the achievement of the RC objectives would involve a variety of stakeholders.

3.5 Funding Base

For fiscal year 1995/96, the total proposed budget for the Windsor RC was $1,206,000. The components of the budget are illustrated in Exhibit 3.4 and 3.5.

Exhibit 3.4
In-Kind Contributions

Source of Contribution	Amount
HRDC	$80,000 (salary) + $16,000 (benefits) = $96,000
Municipal/Provincial	$425,000 (salary) + $85,000 (benefits) = $510,000
Total In-kind contributions	**$606,000**

It should be noted that until recently, the RC has not been charged rent. This reduces the overall anticipated expenditures for the year by $90,000.

An estimate of the delivery cost per client is based on total clients served and expenditures incurred by December, 1995. According to the information available from the December, 1995 quarterly report submitted to MCSS, a total of 2,041 clients had been served and $405,459 expanded on that date. The cost per client can therefore be estimated at: $405,459 ÷ 2,041 = $199 per client.

Exhibit 3.5
Budget Components

Expense Component	Amount (as outlined in 1995/96 budget)
Employee salaries (including in-kind contributions)	$726,000
Employee benefits (including in-kind contributions)	$145,200
Accommodations	
Rent & utilities Telecommunications Photocopier rentals	$90,000 $15,000 $2,500
Materials & supplies	$47,600
Purchase of services	$158,000
Additional Employee Related Expenses (ERE)	$21,700
TOTAL (including in-kind contributions)	**$1,206,000**

3.6 Accountability and Structure for Service Delivery

The Client Tracking System (CTS), designed to track activities of the Employment Services unit within the City of Windsor Social Services organization, was originally implemented as the client tracking system for the RC. A province-wide jobLink client tracking system has subsequently been developed. The RC is currently working with MCSS technical staff in order to modify the new system so that the management reports currently available from the existing CTS will be available from the new system.

Examples of the information collected with the system include the following:

- tombstone data (e.g., name, address, telephone number, gender, SIN);

- type of financial assistance received;
- family description;
- education level;
- primary, and alternative, occupations;
- years of experience;
- type of program client is involved in, and reason;
- barriers at the beginning and end of program;
- employment plans; and
- history of actions taken.

The CTS tracks client interventions as well as client status (e.g., found employment, attending training, referred to a community agency). It tracks expenditures on a per client basis in terms of allowances and direct programming expenditures. The system does not, however, track HRDC program expenditures, nor does it include the in-kind contributions provided in support of the RC.

Baseline information is collected in the CTS regarding the number of active clients, the number of new clients and the number of clients closed to various activities. The system also lists job ready clients. Client needs are identified in a very general way based on identified barriers. An "action taken" history is captured for each client, and each paper client file contains additional detailed information regarding the interventions.

Overall financial controls are maintained within the City of Windsor. Monthly reports are prepared and submitted to the RC Manager within the City of Windsor regarding program achievements, client volumes, etc. Quarterly client status/achievement reports as well as expenditure/budget reports are prepared by the City of Windsor and submitted to MCSS.

3.7 Other Issues

In January 1996, four employment caseworkers and a receptionist were hired for the RC, with salaries funded from the RC budget. The hiring process used to

identify and subsequently hire these new individuals caused some concern among the various partners involved with the RC. Since the City of Windsor is the accountability centre for the Windsor RC, staff on the RC payroll are subject to the collective agreement which covers all City of Windsor Social Services staff. Therefore, only City of Windsor staff could apply for the new positions. Despite the legal requirements inherent in the signed agreement between the City of Windsor and MCSS, certain interviewees expressed concern regarding the manner in which new staff were able to apply for, and secure, these positions.

4.0 FINDINGS - SUDBURY

The findings on the review of the Sudbury Resource Centres are presented in this chapter. Sudbury differs from Windsor in that, due to the region's geography, there is more than one Resource Centre devoted to the provision of services to Social Assistance Recipients (SARs). Resource Centres (RCs) have been established in the following locations:

- Sudbury Central;
- Sudbury East (1 central office located in Noelville, and 4 outreach offices located in St-Charles, Warren, Markstay and Alban);
- Sudbury West (Espanola);
- Chapleau; and
- Manitoulin Island.

In this section, overall findings for the 5 RCs are presented. While differentiating characteristics of the Resource Centres are highlighted whenever such distinctions are warranted, the findings discussed in this section have often been pooled and do not necessarily reflect the situation in all five Sudbury RCs.

4.1 Contractual Agreements

This section presents information on the partners, formal and informal, involved with the Sudbury Resource Centres.

4.1.1 Operating Partners

All Sudbury Resource Centres include as an operating partner the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). The main role of the MCSS in the RCs is to provide funding. Each RC has an accountability centre responsible for operations. The accountability centre varies by location. The presence of other operating partners also varies by location. While Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) has not signed contractual

agreements with individual RCs[2], it did provide in-kind contributions to all Resource Centres in the form of equipment (e.g., job banks/LMI, computers, photocopiers, fax machines). Exhibit 4.1 provides information regarding the operating partners involved at each site.

The role of the partners involved in the day-to-day operations of the RCs was generally described as participation in the development of program direction, planning and development. Partnership-related issues appear to have had a greater impact on the development and implementation of the Resource Centre in Sudbury Central than in other locations, in all likelihood because the number of formal partners (five) is greater there than it is elsewhere. For example, it took the better part of the first year of implementation to solve some issues. As a result, an agreement with one of the partners has only recently been signed.

Overall, it was felt that the respective roles and responsibilities of the partners involved in the various Resource Centres in Sudbury were clear to those involved. The concerns regarding the roles and responsibilities of partners were related more to issues of equality in the decision-making process than to an understanding of these roles and responsibilities.

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[2] As in Windsor, contractual agreements were entered into by HRDC and MCSS. The latter in turn signed contractual agreements with the individual Resource Centres.

Exhibit 4.1
Operating Partners

Resource Centre	Operating Partners	Roles and Responsibilities
Sudbury Central	MCSS	Funding agent
	Regional Municipality of Sudbury	Accountability centre Delivery agent Provision of 3 staff
	Youth Employment Services (YES/YMCA)	Provision of staff (1 in-kind through a partnership agreement and 1 paid from the RC budget through a purchase of service agreement)
	People United for Self Help (PUSH)	Provision of staff (1 in-kind through a partnership agreement and 1 paid from the RC budget through a purchase of service agreement)
	HRDC	Provision of equipment Provision of 1 staff (in-kind)
Sudbury East	MCSS	Funding agent
	Community Action Network/Réseau Action Communautaire (CAN RAC)	Accountability centre Delivery agent
	HRDC	Provision of equipment
Sudbury West (Espanola)	MCSS	Funding agent
	HRDC	Accountability centre Delivery agent Provision of resources, equipment and staff Funds certain activities (e.g., training)
Chapleau	MCSS	Funding agent
	Sault College	Accountability centre Provision of in-kind staff and materials
	HRDC	Provision of equipment
Manitoulin Island	MCSS	Funding agent
	Town of Little Current	Accountability centre Provision of staff
	HRDC	Provision of equipment

4.1.2 Other Partners

Most of the key informants interviewed for the review of the resource centres identified community agencies, particularly those which refer clients to the RC, as informal partners of the Resource Centres. In all locations except Sudbury Central, local advisory committees have been established as a mechanism to involve community partners in the Resource Centres. These local advisory groups typically involve representatives from various community agencies that have an interest in the client group served by the Resource Centres. The committees can also involve SARs. Meetings of these groups are generally held quarterly.

Local advisory committees provide advice and direction to the Resource Centres on a number of issues. One key informant believed that other mechanisms (such as focus groups) would provide a better forum for involving clients in the Resource Centres. Indeed, it was believed some clients may feel uncomfortable participating in a committee where income maintenance workers are present. Furthermore, clients are generally not interested in agenda items such as approving minutes.

The original plans for the Sudbury Central RC involved the establishment of a local advisory committee. However, the process only went as far as identifying potential participants. While there were two community meetings held at the proposal stage (i.e. in order to identify the accountability centre for the RC), a permanent committee involving various community representatives has not been established as it has in other locations. A number of key informants attributed this to the uncertainty that followed the June 1995 provincial election: partners wanted to wait and see what would happen with the jobLink initiative before setting up a permanent committee.

To a certain extent, partnerships also exist amongst some Resource Centres. For example, staff of one RC may contact the staff of another RC in order to obtain information on a particular subject or share relevant information. While the RCs communicated with each other through a formal group before implementation, there has not been any ongoing communication among the five centres since their establishment. The service description schedule of the service contracts between MCSS and the various accountability centres specifically states that a Management Group comprised of management representation from all five Resource Centres would be developed to facilitate the coordination among the RCs (i.e. combining service planning, program strategies, information sharing, and resource sharing).

Such communication was not consistently perceived as a need by all key informants. Some believed that given the fact that the RCs serve separate

markets, the existing, informal communication among some RCs was enough. Others felt that the five RCs should be involved in more ongoing communication through committee meetings and electronic mail (e-mail). While the RC managers had been told that their sites would be connected through e-mail, this has not yet been done. Increased communication among the RCs would allow them to share experiences and lessons learned. Such communication might benefit the smaller RCs more than the larger ones since the former do not have a complement of staff that provide them with the opportunities to share experiences and learn from each other.

4.2 Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of each Resource Centre (characteristics, number of staff, roles of staff, reporting structure) is presented in the first part of this section. Information related to the skill set in place in the RCs is presented in the second part of the section.

4.2.1 Structure

Each Resource Centre in Sudbury has a particular structure. This structure, as well as the number of staff present in each RC and their respective roles, is summarized in Exhibit 4.2. It should be mentioned that the structure for the Sudbury East location was expected to change slightly in April. The funding CAN RAC receives from the province has been completely cut. One of the counsellors will therefore have to be let go. As a result, the manager will perform more counselling duties.

There have also been important changes in the Chapleau RC since implementation of the centre. Sault College, the accountability centre for the RC, has undergone considerable downsizing. Originally, administrative functions were centred in Chapleau. Five staff handled these functions for the college, who also assisted the RC counsellor in her work. However, there is now only one administrator left for the College. This individual is based in Wawa, not Chapleau, which means that there is no longer any on-site administrative or clerical support for the RC counsellor. This limits the counsellor's ability to conduct partnership development activities with Aboriginal communities, as would be desired, since the RC must be closed when she leaves.

Table 4.2
RC Structure (in March, 1996)

Sudbury Central	1 central office that provides some outreach services to other RCs in the District of Sudbury (Espanola and Sudbury East). Resource centre workers from the Regional Municipality of Sudbury (RMS), YES and PUSH are co-located. Counsellors from the Municipal Employment Program (MEP), as well as a job developer from the RMS, are also located on site. Total staff: 16	1 coordinator	RC management and administration Staff supervision
		1 secretary	Secretarial duties
		1 clerk/receptionist	Clerical duties (e.g., handles mail and accounts, issues cheques)
		7 resource centre workers (3 from RMS, 2 from PUSH, 2 from YES; counsellors share Resource Centre duties on a rotating basis)	Initial intake of clients Basic assessment of needs Client assistance (e.g., in preparing resumes, cover letters) Workshops Internal and external references
		1 HRDC counsellor	Mix of RC worker and counselling duties
		4 Counsellors (MEP)	In-depth assessments Internal (to HRDC for training) and external referrals
		1 job developer	Match clients to employers for job placements that are in accordance with client's goals
Sudbury East	1 central office 4 outreach offices Co-location of central office with Boréal College Up until recently, on-site services were provided by various groups/agencies on a part-time basis Outreach services provided by Sudbury Central counsellor Total staff: 4	1 coordinator	Management and admistration
		2 counsellors (share outreach duties)	Client intake Needs assessment Vocational counselling External referrals
		1 clerk (casual; works for RC once a week)	Clerical duties

Sudbury West (Espanola)	RC integrated into CEC Welfare workers provide services on-site on a part-time basis Outreach services provided by Sudbury Central counsellor Total staff: 7	1 manager	RC and CEC management and administation Staff supervision
		3 clerks	Initial intake Client assistance
		2 employment officers	Basic assessment of client needs and goals Internal and external referrals
		1 counsellor	In-depth counselling External referrals
Chapleau	1 central office with outreach services to two communities Co-location with Sault College and social services Total staff: 2	1 manager	RC accountability
		1 staff	Management and administration of day-to-day operations Client intake Client assistance Employment counselling Referrals Outreach services
Manitoulin Island	1 central office with outreach services to two communties Toal staff: 3	1 manager	RC accountability
		1 full-time staff	Management and administration of day-to-day operations Client intake Client assistance Employment counselling Referrals Outreach services
		1 part-time staff	Client intake, assistance and counselling in the absence of the full-time staff

The roles and responsibilities of Resource Centre staff were generally believed to be clear to all concerned. This is especially true in the smaller locations where 1 or 2 staff share all duties (Sudbury East, Chapleau and Manitoulin Island). Most centres examined had staff job descriptions. However, one counsellor reported that while he understood the broad mandate of the RC counsellors, he was not sure about the limits of this role. For example, he felt contacting employers should be part of the counsellors' role and responsibilities but was not sure whether this fell within their mandate.

Sudbury Central is the location with the greatest number of staff. A number of key informants believed that the lack of planning in establishing the RC and lack of early direction meant that the RC workers' roles had not been clearly defined before they started the job. Nevertheless, some interviewees reported that Resource Centre workers' roles and responsibilities, including the limits of these roles and responsibilities, had become clearer with time. However, it was also believed that some Resource Centre workers were now performing more counselling duties than was warranted and were not always referring clients to counsellors when they should be.

Key informants did not identify major issues or problems related to the reporting structure in any of the RC locations. This is true even in the Sudbury Central RC, where staff come from various organizations. In this RC, while staff may still discuss particular issues with their off-site supervisor, they all ultimately report to the Resource Centre coordinator.

4.2.2 Skills Set

Key informants interviewed in the context of the study reported that all RC staff have the basic skills required to serve clients. Most have backgrounds that match the requirements of their job (e.g., background in social services) and most have also performed the same or related duties for a number of years. Furthermore, staff from all five RCs have attended training in relevant areas (e.g., needs assessment and testing, counselling modules). While RC staff generally felt well-equipped to perform their duties, most reported a need for ongoing training.

Generally, there are no formal mechanisms for assessing training needs in the Sudbury RCs. The exception is the Sudbury West (Espanola office), where there exists a structure within the CEC for monitoring the quality of services provided. The results indicate areas where further training may be needed.

In most RCs, staff are responsible for identifying their training needs. Information pamphlets on available training are sometimes distributed and staff can identify the training in which they feel they should participate. It appears that formal training needs assessments are needed in most RCs. Ongoing training would contribute to ensuring consistent service. File management and monitoring of documentation were identified as mechanisms that would help assess the quality of the duties performed by staff, and thus identify potential areas where training may be needed.

4.3 Services and Activities Provided at the Resource Centres

The same basic services are provided in all Sudbury RC locations. Services can be self-directed or staff-assisted. Similarly, clients all go through similar intake and assessment processes. Typically, the intake for a new client consists of determining the client's status (e.g., GWA, FBA) and obtaining basic information (e.g., name, address, telephone number). A basic needs assessment is then conducted. Through this assessment, RC staff and the client identify the client's skills, work experience, career goals, etc. and determine an appropriate course of action (e.g., resume preparation, referral to another agency, referral to specific training programs). If a client is uncertain or unaware of his goals and requires additional counselling, in-depth counselling is then conducted. In locations with a limited number of staff (Sudbury East, Chapleau, Manitoulin Island), the intake, assessment and counselling duties are conducted by the same person. In larger centres (Sudbury Central and Espanola), duties are distributed among various staff (see Exhibit 4.2).

Tools can be used to assist clients during the assessment and counselling processes. For example, RCs have access to computer programs (e.g., Discovery[3]) which can help clients do an inventory of their skills and help them clarify their goals. Assessment forms developed by the respective RCs or used by the service providers (e.g., regional employment support services) before the establishment of the RC and assessment booklets can also be used.

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3 The Chapleau location does not have access to this program, which was identified as a gap.

All RCs include the following equipment that can be used by clients:

- HRDC kiosks, including job banks, labour market information and printed materials on programs;
- computers (including word processing software, personal assessment software (in most cases), and resume writing software (in some cases));
- printers;
- photocopiers;
- resource libraries that contain, for example, information on other service providers, catalogues of colleges and upgrading programs, videos;
- television, VCR and camera; and
- telephones and fax machines.

Some of this equipment is not available in outreach offices. For example, two outreach offices in Sudbury East do not have job banks, televisions, VCRs or cameras. Furthermore, computerized assessment programs are not available at the Chapleau site. Requests were made to obtain these programs but budget restrictions reportedly kept the programs from being installed. The Sudbury Central office includes equipment accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, all RCs (except for the Sudbury East outreach offices) have reportedly delivered workshops to clients on topics such as job searching and interviewing skills.

The referral process is more or less formal depending on the RC location. In Sudbury Central, a form is used to refer clients to community agencies. The back of the form can be used by community agencies to provide feedback on the outcomes of the referral. In Manitoulin Island, clients bring referral forms to each agency they visit: this avoids duplicating the information collected from clients. In other locations, referrals are less formal. Either clients are informed of where they can access other services or referrals are made over the telephone. There is little follow-up of these referrals in terms of outcomes.

4.3.1 Integration of Services Within the Resource Centre

The extent to which various services (including job banks and Labour Market Information kiosks) are integrated within the RCs, as with other aspects, depends on each individual RC. As discussed above, most RCs possess the same basic equipment. RCs have reached various levels of integration of services. The co-location model, where various service providers are located on the same site, facilitates the integration of services. The co-location model is in use, to varying degrees, in the following sites:

- **Sudbury Central:** the municipality's employment support services have been moved to the RC site, HRDC has provided one full-time staff in-kind, and partners with specific experience in youth and disability issues are integrated into the RC;

- **Sudbury East:** the central office is co-located with Boréal College (which offers the Futures program). Until recently, other service providers delivered services on-site on a part-time, rotating basis. These service providers included a chiropractor, a reflexologist, representatives from a mental health agency, a literacy program, Sudbury and District Health unit, Victorian Order of Nurses and legal services (not an all inclusive list). However, budget constraints have reduced the capacity of some providers to continue to deliver services on-site;

- **Sudbury West (Espanola):** the RC is integrated within the CEC. The same services are provided to all clients. Income maintenance workers also provide services on-site four days a week; and

- **Chapleau:** the RC is located in the same building as Sault College and the municipal social services. Sault College involves, among other things, Futures workers, placement officers, information on upgrading and university programs, the Ontario Basic Skills program, and programs for Aboriginal people.

It was reported that it would be difficult to get many service providers located on-site in Manitoulin Island given the lack of appropriate building space.

The following were identified as the major advantages to the location of various service providers on the same site:

- co-location allows clients to have access to numerous services without having to travel between locations. This can be an important advantage for clients who have a restricted travel budget (e.g., to pay for bus tickets); and

- co-location allows both staff and clients to have access to a range of expertise on-site. A number of key informants mentioned that the knowledge they need to provide services to clients had increased tremendously as a result of being co-located with others. Co-location facilitates the exchange of relevant information between partners.

While co-location obviously facilitates the integration of numerous services, effective coordination of these services does not necessarily follow from co-location. Meetings between the various service providers, or partners, appears to facilitate coordination. For example, in Chapleau, the RC staff attends the monthly staff meetings held at Sault College. These meetings facilitate the exchange of information and coordination of services. Where numerous services are co-located, regular, joint meetings of staff contribute to building a team spirit among staff, as well as a sense of belonging to an integrated unit. Such meetings should be encouraged in the RCs where they are not already taking place.

4.3.2 Partnerships and Relationships with the Community

In most locations, the community is involved, directly or indirectly, in the Resource Centres. Positive relationships between the various Resource Centres and the respective communities involved were generally reported by key informants. Positive relationships are usually facilitated by the presence of a local advisory committee and other community committees in which Resource Centres staff may be involved. The absence of a committee involving the community appears to have led to some resentment among some community agencies in the area served by Sudbury Central. On the other hand, it was also reported that resentment towards the Resource Centre in the community has diminished since its implementation. Community agencies have realized that the

RC is meeting a need among clients and a number of community agencies have expressed an interest in becoming more involved in the RC.

Furthermore, the Regional Municipality of Sudbury has had ongoing relationships with a number of community agencies for 10 years and it was

reported that many of these relationships have remained positive since the establishment of the RC. In addition to the existence of established relationships, the size of the community also appears to have had an impact on the development of positive relationships between the RCs and community agencies. The smaller the community, the easier it is to communicate with other relevant service providers, even in the absence of a formal mechanism.

Nevertheless, the presence of formal mechanisms such as Resource Centre-specific committees or other community committees in which the RCs are involved or from which they receive information contribute to the development of positive relationships with, and mutual knowledge and understanding of, other community agencies.

Exhibit 4.3, provides an overview of the various mechanisms used in each RC location to facilitate exchanges between the respective RCs and various community agencies.

Key informants who provided input to this study were asked whether the Resource Centres duplicate any services available in the community. In general, interviewees reported minimal duplications between the services provided by the respective Resource Centres and others in the community. The potential for duplication of services in small areas with few service providers is limited. In addition, the exchange mechanisms identified in Exhibit 4.3 contribute to limiting duplications. Furthermore, many community agencies face budget cuts which limit their ability to provide services, a void which RCs can sometimes fill. However, it was also reported that cuts to programs and services mean that there is a limited pool of services to which some Resource Centres can refer clients (e.g., training in a particular field, literacy programs), leading to gaps in services. Training is a particularly important gap in small communities.

Exhibit 4.3
Exchange Mechanisms Between the RCs and the Communities

Resource Centre	Mechanisms
Sudbury Central	Partners in the RC belong to various community committees. The RMS and HRDC have had ongoing relationships with many community agencies that existed prior to the establishment of the RC.
Sudbury East	Some of the jobLink Advisory Committee members are also members of the CAN RAC board and sub-committees. These committees include sectoral and regional representation.
Sudbury West (Espanola)	The jobLink Advisory Commiitee is composed of representatives from various service groups. A broader inter-agency group involves members from the Advisory Committee. Relationships already existed between the CEC and many community agencies prior to the establishment of the RC.
Chapleau	RC staff attends Sault College staff meetings and communicates with the college's staff on a regular, more informal basis. RC staff also communicates regularly with other service providers (e.g., occupational therapist, mental health representative) on an informal basis. A jobLink Advisory Committee is in place and the Community Training and Education Coalition channels information on the community's training needs to the RC through Sault College.
Manitoulin Island	A jobLink Advisory Committee has been established. A broader inter-agency group also exists.

The potential for duplication of services existed in Sudbury Central. Indeed, a Vocational Resource Centre (VRC) was already in place in this location prior to the establishment of the RC. However, the VRC now refers SARs to the Resource Centre. A review of the Spring/Summer 1995 edition of the "Employment Services Handbook - A Resource Manual for Social Assistance Recipients", published by the Employment Support Services Section of the Regional Municipality of Sudbury, indicates that there are few areas of duplication between the services provided by the Resource Centre and other community groups, with the possible exception of the YMCA's Youth Employment Services and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. While there are similar services provided to SARs, the descriptions contained in the booklet suggest that these are more intensive than those provided at the RC and not ongoing in nature.

The description for Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) states that one of the program's purposes is to assist persons with disabilities in preparing for and finding work. This statement indicates a potential duplication of services

between those provided at the RC for persons with disabilities and those provided by VRS. In addition, the description for Youth Employment Services (YES) indicates that there is a definite potential for duplication of services between this program and the RC.

While the YES Director and on-site staff were interviewed during the conduct of this study, YES staff located off-site and clients were not interviewed. The full extent of potential duplication between the RC and off-site YES is therefore difficult to assess. However, it was mentioned that more cooperation was needed between these two service providers in order to limit duplications of services. For example, it was reported that the Resource Centre does not provide resumes on disk. That means that if a young person prepares a resume at the RC, goes to the YES office located off-site to obtain additional services and that modifications need to be made to the resume, the resume must be typed over again.

Despite the potential duplications identified for the Sudbury Central RC, it was generally felt that all RCs have been successful in establishing a single, integrated system of programs and services for SARs (particularly those in receipt of GWA) in their community. To some extent, this has been achieved through the co-location model and by referring clients to other relevant agencies when client needs go beyond the assistance that can be provided by the RC.

4.3.3 Client Volumes and Characteristics

This section presents information on client volumes and characteristics for the Sudbury Resource Centres. All Resource Centres but the Sudbury Central RC serve both SAR and non-SAR clients. In Sudbury Central, anyone can use the on-site job banks. However, the remaining resources in the RC can only be used by SAR clients. The other RCs take different approaches to serving non-SAR clients. In Sudbury East, non-SAR clients (e.g., people on U.I., those who are U.I. ineligible) have been warned that service priority goes to SARs. While files are not kept on non-SAR clients, the number of these clients who have used RC services are identified in the quarterly reports submitted to MCSS.

In Sudbury West, the CEC and RC combined staff serve all clients equally and all clients have access to the equipment. In Chapleau, clients were reported to be primarily SARs. The RC is examining the possibility of charging a fee to clients other than SARs for the use of some services, such as telephone, because some monthly expenses are very high.

In the Manitoulin Island RC, the following have been identified as target groups for the centre:

- SARs and their spouses;
- persons with disabilities who receive social assistance and their spouses; and
- people at risk of becoming SARs (e.g., unemployed U.I. recipients, individuals ineligible for U.I., unemployed individuals and those at risk of losing their job).

Client volumes for the quarters ending in September and December, 1995, are summarized in Exhibit 4.4.

It should be noted that the figures presented in Exhibit 4.4 correspond to those presented in the quarterly reports provided to us and that these reports include some inconsistencies that could not be resolved. It should also be noted that "total clients served" correspond to the level of activities conducted by the RCs and not to the number of individuals who are clients of the RCs. Furthermore, the figures provided by the RCs do not all necessarily correspond to the same thing. For example, the figures for total clients served in Sudbury East and Manitoulin include non-SAR and SAR clients whereas figures are only provided for SAR clients by the other RCs. Unless users of the quarterly reports presented to MCSS[4] are aware of these differences, there would appear to be a need for a more consistent and agreed upon way of presenting the information across the Resource Centres. This need is compounded by the fact that the information presented by the Windsor RC in its quarterly reports is not the same as that for the Sudbury RCs since the forms used are not the same (the Sudbury RCs use a MCSS jobLink Ontario Resource Centre reporting form whereas the Windsor RC uses a form that was developed for the Municipal/First Nations Employment Program).

While serving clients other than SARs does not appear to be an issue in some of the Resource Centres examined (for example, Sudbury West serves all clients equally and is well under budget), it seems to be creating difficulties for others, the Chapleau RC in particular. Indeed, the use of services by clients other than

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[4] These reports do not include references to the number of clients who belong to equity groups (e.g., Aboriginals, visible minorities, persons with disabilities).

SARs in this RC is driving up expenses at a time when funding should be used judiciously. It should be mentioned that a few key informants believed that Resource Centres generally should assist all unemployed people in their search for employment and not be restricted to serving SARs.

Exhibit 4.4
Client Activity Second (ending September) and Third (ending December) Quarters, 1995

Sudbury Central										
1st quarter	6628	1332	882			2214				
2nd quarter	3947	155	102			257				
Total	6628	1487	984			2471				
Espanola										
1st quarter	159	26	82	142	9	259	69	9		78
2nd quarter	194	14	8	41	1	64	8	1		9
Total	353	40	90	183	10	323	77	10		87
Sudbury East										
1st quarter	287	13	34	23	20	90	11	28	21	60
2nd quarter	167	0	11	0	10	21	3	4	4	11
Total	329	13	45	23	30	111	14	32	25	71
Chapleau										
1st quarter	62	0	5	17	0	22	1	7	2	10
2nd quarter	20	n/a	3	7	1	11	3	4		9
Total	82	n/a	8	24	1	33	4	11	4	19
Manitoulin Island										
1st quarter	176	1	11	2	3	17	10	15	13	38
2nd quarter	116	1	8	0	8	17	4	5	5	14
Total	292	2	19	2	11	34	14	20	18	52

4.4 Resource Centre Implementation and Objectives

In this section, we provide an overview of the service model used in each Resource Centre and discuss the factors that had an impact on the implementation of the model. The alternative models envisioned by the various sites are also discussed whenever relevant.

4.4.1 Service Models Used

The characteristics of the various RC structures in place in each of the Sudbury locations was described in Exhibit 4.2. An overview of the models implemented at each site is provided below.

- **Sudbury Central** - Staff from the RC, HRDC, YES and PUSH as well as the municipality's Employment Support Services unit have been integrated within the centre. The RC provides outreach counselling services to two other Sudbury RCs.

- **Sudbury East** - The central RC-CAN RAC office, in Noelville, is co-located with Boréal College. Other service providers have come to this RC to provide services on-site on a part-time basis. The model also includes four outreach offices.

- **Sudbury West (Espanola)** - The RC is integrated within the Canada Employment Centre. Income maintenance workers provide services on-site four times a week.

- **Chapleau** - The RC is co-located with Sault College and the municipality's social services. The RC's central office serves two outreach offices.

- **Manitoulin Island** - The Resource Centre is located in a central office serving two outreach offices.

The co-location model was perceived to be highly effective. As mentioned previously, the co-location of RCs with other service providers allows RC staff to easily exchange information and increase their knowledge of areas of interest to their clients. The different expertise possessed by the various co-located

partners (formal or informal) means clients can access a range of services without having to travel between locations. In addition, the various partners each bring their own network and knowledge of the resources available in the area, which increases the likelihood that clients will be suitably referred. The downside to the co-location model is that it can make management of the resource centre more difficult.

Sudbury Central

In Sudbury Central, the staff were said to have had a major impact on the successful implementation of the co-location model. It was reported that staff had successfully worked together to make the RC an integrated site that is very client-oriented and develop the RC within a harried developmental process, and in the absence of a clear plan and direction. The presence of an HRDC staff on-site was identified as a particular benefit of the co-location model as it allows the other RC workers to increase their knowledge of employment- and training-related issues as well as their knowledge of community resources.

Originally, the proposal made by the Regional Municipality of Sudbury for the Sudbury Central RC called for a broader co-location model than is currently the case. Indeed, it was envisioned that various community agencies and service providers would come on-site one or two days a week to provide services in-kind or that RC space would be used by them to hold special group sessions when required.

While this envisioned model is still supported, the lack of space in the current location would make it difficult for any other partners to provide services on-site, even on a rotating basis. Furthermore, community agencies may not have the resources needed to provide in-kind services to the RC. This is especially true at a time when many of these agencies are facing budget cuts. In addition, agencies whose target group is broader than SARs may not be willing to contribute an in-kind staff that would only serve this group since this approach would not fit within their mandate.

Sudbury East

CAN RAC's original plan was also to have more partners co-locate with the RC. The idea was to develop a multi-service, one-stop shopping site that would allow clients to meet the majority of their needs in one location. The desire of other service providers to preserve their own interests was believed to have kept CAN RAC from developing this approach. Nevertheless, it was believed that given the

current fiscal environment, service providers would increasingly have to co-locate in the future in order to share costs such as overheads.

As explained above, Sudbury East is comprised of one central office and four outreach offices serving smaller communities. While this model was believed to be good in terms of serving the community's needs, the relevance of having sites that serve a very small population was disputed by a few key informants. It was believed that the whole Sudbury East area could be served through outreach services provided by the Sudbury Central office. The outreach office in Warren, in particular, was identified as a site whose client traffic does not warrant keeping it open. The figure for the total active client case load for the month of February, for example, was seven.

One disadvantage of the approach used in Sudbury East is that using an agency that is highly-depended on the province for its cashflow as the RC accountability centre makes the RC vulnerable to budget cuts. Indeed, the funding that CAN RAC receives from the province has been eliminated for 1995-96. This means that the organization will only have the jobLink budget as a source of financing. While the majority of the organization's operations are expected to be dedicated to the RC in the new fiscal year, these cuts mean that one counsellor will have to be let go and that services will have to be scaled down.

Sudbury West

It was reported that the major factor impacting the success of implementation in Sudbury West was the fact that the Resource Centre had been integrated within the CEC. All resources in this location (staff and equipment) are equally dedicated to all clients. As a result, many of the costs that would be incurred by the RC if it were located on its own have been, and continue to be, assumed by the CEC. The only expenses paid out of the jobLink budget are those that have been incurred incrementally since the establishment of the RC. As a result, it was estimated that approximately $20,000 would be returned to the province for the 1995-96 fiscal year.

The existing relationships with the community were also believed to have contributed to the successful implementation of the RC in this location. However, as was mentioned before, the open, public process used for selecting the RC site was believed to have left some scars in the community. The suggested alternative would have been to speak with potential partners and assess their proposals individually.

Chapleau

The co-location approach used in Chapleau was believed to provide, as in other locations, a number of advantages. However, the difficulties experienced by the Sault College has had some impacts on service delivery. The one staff that works in the RC is not supported by the College in her administrative activities anymore and it was feared that further budget cuts would lead to the elimination of some programs of value to clients. In addition, the fact that the RC only has one staff means that this staff has not been able to reach out to other potential partners (i.e. the Aboriginal community) as much as desired.

Manitoulin Island

The Manitoulin Island RC is the only one that does not include any form of co-location with other partners. While the co-location model was initially considered for the site, it was believed that it would have been difficult to get many agencies located in the same building due to a lack of space. However, the RC will soon co-locate with the social services office, which was seen as an important move for the Resource Centre. As in other areas, the budget cuts experienced by many organizations mean there are now less programs to which clients can be referred.

The major advantage associated with the model in Manitoulin Island is that the size of the centre (small, with one familiar staff) makes clients comfortable about coming to the RC. The disadvantage of having only one staff working in the centre is that clients sometimes have to wait to be served if they require assistance. However, it was expected that such waiting would be reduced when the RC moves to the Town of Little Current's offices since the staff that works with the RC on a part-time basis is also located there.

The central RC was reported to be more effective than the outreach offices (located in municipal and town offices). These outreach offices do not have equipment. It therefore takes longer to serve a client who wants, for example, to prepare a resume. The counsellor has to meet with the client, come back to the central office to prepare the resume on computer, and leave the resume with the client at the next visit. In comparison, clients who come into the central RC (or any other RC) can be served within the same day.

4.4.2 Objectives Achievement

Each RC's accountability centre has signed a service contract with MCSS. These service contracts include a description of the service objectives that each RC should strive to meet. These service objectives are the following:

- provide complete and comprehensive information to consumers which will enable them to make realistic vocational decisions regarding training and employment;

- provide consumers with linkages in the form of referral and follow-up to appropriate community-based training and employment resources;

- provide consumers with information and general assistance regarding community support services and programs which will assist and support consumers in pursuit of their vocational goals;

- collect and analyze data relating to consumers which will assist the community in the ongoing development of their Resource Centre, labour market programs and support services; and

- provide pre-screening assessment services for those clients who require this level of assistance and refer to more intensive community-based vocational services where required.

Overall, all accounts indicate that Resource Centres have been successful in achieving the majority of these objectives. However, achievement of the fourth one, to "collect and analyze data relating to consumers which will assist the community in the ongoing development of their Resource Centre, labour market programs and support services", appears to be limited. While all Resource Centres collect information on their clients, the extent to which this data is analyzed to assist the *community* in the development of the RCs, labour market programs and support services is limited. In Sudbury Central, for example, a local advisory committee through which the information collected could be shared for the benefits of the community has not been implemented.

Furthermore, in this location as in others, the many budget cuts faced by community agencies limit their ability to develop programs and services.

In addition, the Resource Centres were to "provide a highly visible entry point where people on social assistance can receive information on employment, training and supports available locally". Again, all accounts indicate that the Resource Centres have been successful in achieving this objective. The Resource Centres also had to be accessible to the full range of social assistance recipients. In order to meet this last objective, the RC had to meet the following conditions:

- ensure sites are physically accessible;

- ensure clients with disabilities can access services by providing supportive technology and staff assistance;

- ensure the services meet the cultural and linguistic needs of clients as well as ensure outreach efforts reach minority client groups and that services are delivered in a culturally sensitive manner;

- link with the child care network and ensure that parents receive appropriate referrals to licensed and/or informal care;

- promote resource centres services to the full spectrum of potential clients, including youth;

- ensure that the resource centre is linked into the network of community agencies involved in non-employment needs and provide clients with appropriate referrals as needed (e.g., family services, counselling, health care); and

- market Resource Centre services to employers and existing SAR clients who may not have frequent contact with their case workers.

Success in these areas has not been as great as in the others. For example, not all sites are physically accessible (the Noelville and Markstay offices, which were visited during the site visits, are not). Available information indicates that the Sudbury Central office is the only one equipped with supportive technology and where staff have received training that increased their awareness of disability issues. Two staff in the Sudbury Central office also know sign language. However, it was reported that this RC was not being used extensively by persons with disabilities. The Chapleau staff indicated that her informal networking activities with an occupational therapist had allowed her to develop her knowledge of issues related to persons with disabilities.

The information collected during this study does not provide any indication that services do not meet the cultural and linguistic needs of clients. However, a few of the sites have mentioned that increased involvement with the Aboriginal communities was one of their objectives. Because youth can sometimes have access to other services in the community (e.g., YES), the RCs may not be used by this client group to the extent that they could be. The majority of RCs appear to be well linked into (or at least be aware of) the network of community agencies involved in non-employment needs and to be able to make appropriate referrals.

The Resource Centres have used a number of approaches to market their services to employers and SAR clients. However, marketing their services to employers was identified by some key informants as an area that required additional efforts. Clients typically hear about the Resource Centre for the first time through their income maintenance workers or word-of-mouth. Other mechanisms, such as pamphlets, flyers, and newspaper and radio ads, have also been used by individual RCs. In some areas, marketing activities have been limited because of the uncertainty that followed the provincial elections.

The location of the Sudbury Central RC (store-front, in a central downtown area) provides high visibility to the centre. In addition, the Resource Centre is included in the "Employment Services Handbook" (resource manual for SARs), and a newsletter has been developed which will be distributed to field workers and community agencies.

Because Family Benefit Assistance (FBA) recipients are not required to look for employment, it was generally believed that these potential clients are not made aware of the existence of the Resource Centres by their income maintenance workers to the same extent as General Welfare Assistance (GWA) recipients.

While the majority of objectives established for the RCs were said to have been achieved by the Resource Centres, some barriers that limit their achievement were identified by key informants. These barriers include the following:

- many RCs identified the lack of RC-specific funding for employment support (e.g., money to pay for transportation, a pair of work boots) as a barrier to helping clients. While allocations for funding support had been allocated in the original jobLink budgets, this budget has been cut or not provided;

- creating job opportunities for clients, which was one of the Manitoulin Island RC's objectives, was said to be difficult given the economic context;

- the lack of cooperation by clients. In some RCs, clients have not accessed services or participated in certain activities (e.g., workshops) to the extent desired. One key informant believed that unless clients have to participate in a specific activity, they will not. It is difficult to motivate clients to participate in activities that can improve their employability when there are no job opportunities in the area; and

- the environment. This particularly affects the RCs and outreach offices in the smaller areas where there are few, if any, job opportunities. As explained by one key informant, RCs can help clients with their resumes and job search techniques, but if clients don't have means of transportation or are unwilling to relocate, their job opportunities are practically nil.

Most RCs appear to meet client needs and service quality expectations. However, it must be emphasized that this information comes from those involved in RC operations and not clients. Despite general feelings that clients' needs

and service quality expectations were being met by the RCs, the following were identified as barriers or limitations, in addition to those identified above:

- in small communities, lack of programming that clients can access, especially in the area of training. This barrier is compounded by the fact that many programs are disappearing as a result of budget cuts. Furthermore, clients who want to participate in training offered in larger centres, like Sudbury, need to have access to transportation;

- clients from unorganized counties do not have access to the same services as clients from organized counties. For example, the latter can access employment support funds through their income maintenance workers but the former cannot. These differences in the level of service could be addressed by allocating an employment support budget to RCs;

- clients can only be financially assisted through their income maintenance worker for a period of 3 months (down from 6 months);

- the development of some of the RCs has been put on hold because of the context of uncertainty created by the cancellation of the jobLink Initiative; and

- budget cuts, have, in some cases, limited the scope of the services that can be provided to clients and activities that can be undertaken to better serve them.

Interviewees in Manitoulin Island and Sudbury West have identified workshops and interviews with clients as ways of identifying clients' needs. However, most RCs do not have rigorous mechanisms that would allow them to identify client needs, determine whether their services are meeting these needs and adjust services accordingly.

There are no formal mechanisms currently in place that would allow RCs to assess the extent to which quality service expectations are being met. Some RCs have established more or less formal mechanisms for monitoring the quality of the services provided. For example, the CEC in Sudbury West has mechanisms in place that can be used to monitor service quality. In Manitoulin, the Service Description is reviewed every 6 months by the advisory committee to determine whether objectives are being met and whether these objectives are still relevant. Sudbury Central is the only RC for which a customer survey has been planned.

Service-on-demand was identified as a characteristic that distinguishes RCs from many other service providers. For example, the fact that Resource Centre workers do not have client caseloads means that clients can be served as they come in (unless the RC is very busy at that moment) as opposed to having to wait for, or make an appointment with, a particular worker. However, the downside of this approach, as identified by some key informants, is that clients may be told one thing by an RC staff one time and something else by another staff at another time. In addition, the lack of a caseload for RC workers means that outcomes for clients who don't use counselling services cannot be assessed. Clients who need additional help in order to keep focused on their job search might therefore "fall though the cracks."

Some suggestions were made by key informants as ways to better meet client needs and possibly improve service quality:

- increased monitoring of services provided to clients and staff evaluation in order to ensure quality client service;
- the establishment of job clubs for regular users of the RC; and
- a job placement component.

Under the partnership agreement for Sudbury Central, the Regional Municipality of Sudbury must provide four in-kind staff to the centre. It was mentioned that more flexibility was needed in positioning these staff within the whole RC unit. Currently, under the agreement struck with the two other partners, the four staff must be Resource Centre workers. However, it was believed that staff would be better utilized if some became counsellors.

4.5 Funding Base

In Sudbury East and Manitoulin Island, most of the funding for the RCs comes from MCSS. Significant in-kind contribution have been made to RCs by partners. In-kind contributions come from the following sources:

- **Sudbury Central** - Regional Municipality of Sudbury (1 staff, equipment, legal services, computer support, some training, etc.), HRDC (staff and equipment), YES (1 staff) and PUSH (1 staff);

- **Sudbury East** - CAN RAC (manager's time, clerical support, office space), HRDC (equipment), other service providers (on-site services on part-time basis);

- **Sudbury West** - HRDC (equipment, staff, RC space), municipality (staff);

- **Chapleau** - HRDC (equipment), Sault College (administrative support, equipment, workshop materials, human resources e.g., placement officer, Ontario Skills Development officer); and

- **Manitoulin Island** - HRDC (equipment), Town of Little Current (part-time staff support).

Budget information for the RCs is summarized in Exhibit 4.5.

Exhibit 4.5
Budget Information, on December 31, 1995

Salaries	--	23147	61775	43986	41000	23205	41000	17447	39500	24697
Benefits	--	5945	6000	3929	8200	4641	3691	1671	7900	4085
Sub-total	--	29092	67775	47915	49200	27846	44691	19118	47400	28782
Staff travel/training	--	1990	3400	2833	4000	514	4000	1576	5000	3203
Occupancy/utilities	--	41590	23000	18309	6480		21400	18304	10800	8549
Office Related Expenses	--	13054	3137	2669	8000	976	8000	4558	3000	2176
Purchase of services	--	49012	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	59
Community Advisory Committee	--	148	--	--	--	--	--	--	1000	181
Other	--		1900	1240	--	--	3709	--	3195	313
Sub-total	--	105792	31437	25051	18480	1490	37109	24438	229995	14481
Total	286260	134884	99212	72966	67680	29336	81800	43556	70395	43263
In-kind**	--	--	--	--	>200,000***	--	30000	--	18000	--

* Figures are for the quarter ending in September, 1995 as figures for the quarter ending in December were not available.
** These costs are, for the most part, estimates provided by RC managers.
*** This amount is in salaries alone. The amount of the other in-kind services provided by HRDC could not be estimated.

Estimates of cost per client served are based on information provided in the December, 1995 quarterly reports submitted to MCSS. Based on the figures presented in these reports, the costs per client served, by December, are those presented in Exhibit 4.6.

Exhibit 4.6
Cost per Client Served

Resource Centre	Year to Date Actuals (December, 1995) - Expenses	Year to Date Actuals (December, 1995) - Clients Served	Cost per Client Served
Sudbury Central	$134,884	10,575	$12
Sudbury East	$72,966	329	$222
Sudbury West (Espanola)	$29,336	353	$83
Chapleau*	$43,556	62	$702
Manitoulin Island	$43,263	292	$148

* These figures are for the quarter ending in September as figures for the quarter ending in December were not available.

The figures presented in the exhibit above are only approximations and should be interpreted carefully. Indeed, a better term for "cost per client served" would be "cost per intervention" since the figures reported for clients served represent interventions as opposed to individual clients. Furthermore, some of the figures for total clients served are lower than they should be since self-assisted clients are not all represented in those figures. As a result, for some RCs, the cost per client served is likely lower than what is presented in the exhibit.

4.6 Accountability and Structure for Service Delivery

Each Resource Centre collects the information required to submit a quarterly report to MCSS. These quarterly reports include information on expenditures, number of clients served (self directed and staff assisted), number of new intakes and client files closed, number of referrals by type (i.e. to intense

services, to training programs, to employment programs, to support services), and number of placements into training programs and employment. This information is tracked and maintained manually in the Sudbury East, Chapleau and Manitoulin RCs.

While the RCs all collect the information required in the quarterly reports to be submitted to MCSS, they differ in the amount and type of client-related information that they collect. The Sudbury Central and Sudbury West RCs have systems that allow staff to collect a wide range of information. The smaller RCs, which collect information manually, may only collect the basic information which they need to assist their client. A systematic review of the information collected by each of the RCs was not conducted for this evaluation.

Sudbury Central

The Sudbury Central RC currently uses a mix of manual tracking and computerized tracking. A jobLink database system was recently installed on staff's computers. All data is expected to eventually be entered directly into the system. The information that can be collected through this system includes the following:

- tombstone information on the client;
- family profile;
- client background (e.g., languages spoken and written, degrees, availability for work, supports required, numeracy skills, etc.);
- sources of income;
- skills;
- employment history;
- journal of activities (description, date, notes, staff name);
- employment goals and plans, including steps taken towards achieving the plan and related notes;
- participation in programs (organization's name, start and end dates, funding sources, whether the program is completed);
- participation in training and education programs;

- work placements;
- employment subsidies used;
- pre-employment counselling activities;
- pre-employment support activities;
- job referrals;
- personal supports needed; and
- resource utilization.

The system, if used appropriately, will be a valuable source of information and data for both monitoring and accountability purposes. Client-related information is also collected by the counsellors using the Employment Support Services (ESS) system (which shows, for example, the client's status, his/her employment plans, outcomes). As counsellors do client intake, they enter the information into the jobLink system as well as the ESS system. That way, RC workers can obtain information on a client by accessing the system and without having to ask the client about his status or past interventions and activities. Eventually, the system is expected to be linked with the job banks. This would allow RC workers and clients to easily identify available jobs that match clients' skills and goals. Currently, the use of a single system is not possible in the Sudbury Central RC because the jobLink system cannot issue cheques, which the ESS system does.

Sudbury Central is accountable to both the Regional Municipality of Sudbury (District of Sudbury Social Services Administration Board) and to MCSS for expenses incurred in RC and ESS operations. Reports are provided to these organizations quarterly. The RC is connected through modem to the region's Treasury Board. Expenses are submitted to RMS and reconciliations are made by the office manager of the region's social services. The partners (YES and PUSH) are accountable to their respective boards. The HRDC staff located on site provides information to the department concerning expenses incurred (e.g, training expenses). While the various systems in place allow the collection of detailed information on clients, there appears to be a need to share more information with other partners (e.g., number of clients served by the partners' staff located on-site so that these numbers can be reported to their respective boards, number of clients with disabilities using resources). There is also a need for greater sharing of information between on- and off-site partners so that the same information is not collected more than once.

Sudbury West

In Sudbury West, RC staff use the HRDC system to collect information. The information collected through this system was reported as being sufficient to monitor the interventions and outcomes of clients who have seen a counsellor. The usage of resources by self-directed clients is tracked by asking clients to sign a sheet upon their exit from the RC. Clients are asked to identify the services they used as well as their status (i.e. SAR, U.I. recipient, neither).

There exist a number of internal mechanism in place at the federal level which allow for the monitoring of revenue and expenditures (e.g., computerized systems, requirements for double or triple signatures). The Sudbury West CEC-RC manager keeps track of RC-related expenditures through a spreadsheet and separate book. Expenses that have been incremental since the establishment of the RC (e.g., telephone and fax charges, 16% of photocopier volume) are charged to the jobLink budget. Others are charged to the CEC budget. Cheques, bills and orders are treated by the HRDC administrative centre in Sudbury, which charges RC-related expenses against a jobLink allotment line within the federal budget. Expense reports are sometimes sent to the manager's supervisor. Reports are submitted to MCSS quarterly.

Sudbury East

In Sudbury East, client-related statistics are kept manually by the counsellors. These statistics, as well as financial information, are presented in quarterly reports that are presented to the CAN RAC Board (which reports to the province), the CAN RAC Finance Committee and to MCSS. The jobLink advisory committee and the CAN RAC Finance Committee monitor expenses. The Finance Committee is responsible for handling the RC budget.

Chapleau

Client-related statistics are tracked and submitted in quarterly reports to MCSS. Information is kept manually on clients' characteristics (e.g., SAR, other, Francophone, Aboriginal) and use of services. Furthermore, the RC staff contacts active clients of the centre every three months to determine outcomes. A study of 58 clients was conducted in February in order to determine the outcomes for these clients. The budget is administered by Sault College.

Manitoulin Island

Client-related information is collected by staff working at the RC. However, data on self-directed clients has been difficult to collect because the staff have not been able to develop a system deemed reliable for the collection of such information. They are concerned that asking people to log in, for example, will keep some of them from using the RC services. Nevertheless, a library card is used for clients who use self-directed services regularly and records are maintained for staff-assisted clients. Client files are left open for a period of 3 months following their last visit. Client outcomes are monitored by contacting clients 3 months after their file has been closed. The RC budget is reviewed quarterly and reports containing client-related and financial information are submitted to MCSS quarterly.

5.0 LESSONS LEARNED

This section provides an overview of the lessons learned by the key informants consulted for the conduct of this study as well as the consultants' own observations of lessons learned. The information presented in this section is an amalgamation of the lessons learned from all the sites examined under this study (i.e. one in Windsor, five in Sudbury). The lessons learned are therefore not common across all RCs. Furthermore, because of the study limitations discussed in Section 2.2, the information that forms the basis for these lessons learned is only partial.

a) The need for early identification of existing community services, duplications and gaps.

Various interviewees expressed a need for an objective evaluation of existing services within the community to identify duplications and gaps. This evaluation should be done prior to the design of a new service delivery organization. It was felt that some RCs were up and running before there was a clear understanding within the community of what services were not currently being provided.

b) Time must be allocated to planning.

The Resource Centres were implemented, according to a number of interviewees, very quickly and without proper planning. This resulted in a lack of consultation with sites concerning their need for equipment (equipment was sent by HRDC without manager or staff knowing that it was coming), some staff lacking direction and a proper understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and some partnership negotiations not being closed before the RC's opening, which in turn led to the late installation of some equipment (i.e. special equipment for persons with disabilities).

c) Community involvement in the development and implementation process is both important and demanding.

Involving the community in the RC development process has both positive and negative aspects. By involving the community, gaps can be identified and the need for resources can be determined in consultation with other service providers. In addition, this involvement can contribute to creating a sense of ownership within the community. However, the selection process can also leave scars in the community and this should be acknowledged. Resentment may be created among some agencies, especially if they view the RC as a duplication of

existing services. Resentment can also be created if the selection process for the RC accountability centre is perceived to be unfair. An open, public selection process must therefore be managed carefully. Furthermore, community involvement should be ongoing, especially if promises have been made to this effect. Local advisory committees are one way to keep the RC linked into the community. Community members will feel betrayed if they have been led to believe that such a committee will be established and it is not.

d) There is a need for solid, ongoing communications/relationships among key partners.

Interviewees provided examples of instances where a lack of regular communication created uncertainty and anxiety within the planning/ implementation committees as well as within the community agencies. Within the RCs, communication, both formal and informal, between on-site partners is viewed as integral to RC operations. Staff reported that without open communications, they would have not been able to overcome minor jurisdictional issues.

Community agencies are not certain what activities have been undertaken at some RCs since the implementation committees disbanded. Communication with these groups, perhaps through more intense marketing efforts, would help ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the programs and services offered within the community. There are feelings in some communities that plans were decided before the consultations began.

e) The environment has a major impact on the extent to which Resource Centres can be successful.

Small communities may only provide limited opportunities for training and employment. As a result, it can be difficult to motivate clients to participate in activities that will improve their employability. It can also be difficult for clients who are motivated to have access to transportation in order to travel to large communities to participate in training or a job search. Unless these clients can be assisted in their efforts, there is only so much the Resource Centres can do to help clients. For example, the RCs can help clients prepare effective resumes but if clients cannot access training or job opportunities, a resume is all clients will have.

f) Co-location has advantages for both staff and clients but on-site partners must be coordinated and managed effectively.

The co-location of a number of service providers allows staff to better serve clients by providing them with the opportunity to access various areas of expertise and knowledge, and share pertinent information. Co-location also means that clients can access a number of relevant services without having to travel between locations. However, the co-location of partners who have signed an agreement must be managed and coordinated carefully. Mechanisms that make staff playing different roles within the RC, especially if they come from various organizations, feel like they are part of a single unit must be established.

g) Formal partners must try to set aside their personal needs and interests in order to work for the common good.

It is inevitable that the organizations, and individuals, involved in a partnership agreement will have personal needs and interests that they will want to protect. The personality of the individuals involved in the partnership plays an important role in contributing to the polarization of discussions around related issues, or to the development of a feeling of collaboration and team play amongst the partners. The individuals involved in discussions around partnership issues should possess good leadership and negotiating skills in order to encourage the quick resolution of issues. Furthermore, each partner must try to set aside their personal needs and interests, and not come to the table with a personal agenda, so that the common good can be served.

h) Funding issues should be clarified early.

The funding issue should be clarified early in the process. At the time that the planning committees were meeting, there was no certainty regarding how much funding would be available for the jobLink Initiative. Community agencies were not certain of the extent to which they would be able to access some of the funds, or what their role would be through the jobLink Initiative if they were selected as the Resource Centre.

l) Partners must have an equal say in the development of the Resource Centre.

If a partnership is to be truly equal, all partners who have signed an agreement must be involved in the implementation and development of the Resource Centre. Unless the development of the centre is discussed and coordinated with the partners involved, the partnership will be unequal.

j) Existing relationships between the RC accountability centre and formal and informal partners facilitate implementation.

The existence of relationships between the RC accountability centre and formal partners in the RC as well as informal partners in the community facilitates the implementation and development of the Resource Centre. Existing relationships between formal partners can make discussions around partnership issues easier and more productive. Existing relationships between informal partners can also contribute to limit the development of hard feelings that can result from an open, community selection process. In addition, these relationships facilitate cooperation between the RC and others in the community throughout the RC's operations.

k) The continuity of services may be affected by selecting an RC accountability centre that is highly depended on external funding for its cashflow.

In the current fiscal environment, no organization is immune to budget cuts and the resulting impacts on services. However, some smaller organizations may be more vulnerable than larger ones. Cuts in their budget can have greater impacts on the services provided by the Resource Centre than they would have in a larger organization. In Sudbury, two RC accountability centres have seen their budgets cut dramatically. These cuts have had and will have an impact on the level and scope of services that can be provided at the Resource Centres.

l) Resource Centres managers/coordinators must balance their own workload with the need to maintain ongoing communications among staff.

It is important for communication among staff of a same Resource Centre to be ongoing, especially when these staff come from various organizations. Resource Centre managers or coordinators must ensure that there exist communications mechanisms in place that allow all staff to exchange information and views on a regular basis. Weekly or bi-weekly staff meetings are one way to ensure that all Resource Centre staff, regardless of their organization of origin, feel integrated into the RC and part of a team. If the manager or coordinator is too busy to ensure the continuity of communications (or of other important management issues), consideration should be given to hiring a supervisor or implementing self-directed teams, for example.

m) It is important for the performance of staff to be monitored so that training needs can be identified and addressed on a timely basis.

The performance of Resource Centre staff should be monitored both to ensure that staff get feedback on this issue and to identify the specific areas where additional training might be required. Currently, Resource Centre staff are

generally in charge of identifying their own training needs. If staff do not perceive certain aspects of their performance to be weak while these aspects would be assessed as such if objective evaluation means were used, they will not identify a need for training. The lack of training in certain areas might lead to ineffective or inconsistent client service among staff.

n) There might be a need for data collection and reporting to be more consistent across RCs.

Data is not currently collected and reported consistently across all RCs. While all RCs collect the information necessary to produce quarterly reports which they submit to MCSS, the information contained in these reports is not consistent across all RCs. In addition, most RCs collect information for their own purposes, which is not consistent across RCs either. If consistency in the data collected and reported by different RCs is deemed important, there would be a need to clarify which data should be collected and reported, and how. Issues related to data collection and reporting have been identified as an area for further research in Section 6.2

6.0 CONCLUSION

The first section of this chapter presents overall conclusion for the Process Evaluation of the Windsor and Sudbury Resource Centres. The second section presents areas where further work may be warranted.

6.1 Study Conclusions

A number of common conclusions can be drawn from the review of the Windsor and Sudbury Resource Centres. One of the most significant is that there appears to be a lingering resentment toward the Resource Centres in the locations where local advisory committees have not been established. The community in these locations had been led to believe that mechanisms such as committees would be established to keep community agencies and other service providers linked to the Resource Centres. However, this has not taken place in two cases and the lack of such committees appears to have had an impact on the perception that these communities have of the RCs in these locations. One conclusion is that community expectations must be managed carefully. If the community is made to feel like it is going to be involved throughout the implementation and development of the RCs, continued involvement should be ensured.

The Resource Centres operated by municipalities on a day-to-day basis seem to have gone ahead with the development of the Resource Centres without much input from their formal partners. This may be due to the fact that these organizations had been in the business of providing services to SARs prior to the implementation of the RC and may not feel the need for input from other parties to the extent that another types of accountability centres might. If a partnership is to be truly equal, all partners should feel like their input is important and that it will be taken into account in the development of the RC.

Because of the short time frame within which the Resource Centres were implemented, very little time was dedicated to planning. RCs were not consulted about their needs for equipment, for example. Furthermore, in some RCs, staff were left to figure out their roles and responsibilities as they went along, without much direction. In the larger RCs, the ability of the staff to work together as a team and their willingness to work collaboratively to develop a new enterprise was lauded as a factor that played an important role in the successful implementation of some of the RCs.

The co-location model for the RCs presents many advantages. An obvious advantage is that clients can access a number of related services in a single location. Another advantage is that co-located staff from various organizations have increased opportunities to share information as well as expertise and thus increase their capacities to provide clients with quality service and the information that meets individual needs. Co-location with HRDC has been identified as having provided particular benefits to other co-located staff. Because of HRDC staff's experience with, and knowledge of, employment- and training-related issues, other RC staff have been able to develop their knowledge of the avenues and possibilities open to clients. On the other hand, HRDC staff have been able to learn, especially from regional municipality staff, about aspects related to clients' employability of which they may have not been aware in the past (e.g., need for financial support to go to a job interview or acquire a pair of working boots).

However, co-locating with agencies who are highly dependent on core funding poses special challenges in the current environment. Agencies that do not want to lose their core funding may hesitate to co-locate with the RC on a permanent basis. The environment presents other challenges to the success that can be achieved by the Resource Centres. Many of the agencies to which clients could be referred up until now have been facing significant budget cuts which forces them to limit the scope of their activities. As a result, some RC clients, especially those in small communities, may not be able to access the resources that would help them improve their employability. Furthermore, clients who live in remote areas and who do not have access to transportation may not have access to the resources necessary to travel to get training or look for employment.

In addition to the limitations posed by the fiscal environment, the economic environment also limits the extent to which the RCs can help clients in their search for employment. In areas where there are few job opportunities, it can be hard to motivate clients to help themselves. In addition, clients who do not have the means to move to areas where there are more job opportunities, or even to go there to look for employment, can only go so far in their job search. The help which can be provided by the RC in this context could thus be limited to assisting some clients prepare their resume, with the knowledge that clients do not have the means to move further towards employability.

One issue relevant to most RCs is that there is a need for implementing a mechanism to monitor and assess the training needs of staff. The unequal service provided by the staff of some RCs, as reported by those consulted, indicates that training is an issue that needs to be examined in light of providing quality services to clients.

Despite the difficulties encountered and barriers that can sometimes limit success, the majority of the RCs examined appear to have been successful in meeting their clients' needs, to the extent that they could. While there remain issues to be addressed to improve RC operations, accounts from the majority of those consulted in this study report that Resource Centres have provided a valuable resource to the communities where they are located.

6.2 Areas for Further Research

One important area that has not been addressed in this study, because of time and budget constraints, is client-related issues. The information stated in this report concerning issues such as client satisfaction is only cursory given that this information comes from third parties and not client themselves. It would be important to consult clients directly - either through surveys, focus groups or interviews - in order to gauge their satisfaction with the Resource Centres and assess the qualitative impacts of interventions. While the Windsor Resource Centre has completed a client satisfaction survey, results may have been biased since some clients may have been reluctant to state their true opinion for fear that this would have an impact on the service they receive at the RC. Independent research would therefore be important in order to obtain an accurate picture of client satisfaction.

Another area which would require further investigation is community-related issues. The interviews conducted with some community representatives as well as the opinion stated by other interviewees have allowed us to comment, to some extent, on the nature of the partnerships and relationships that have been developed between the RCs and community organizations. However, these comments cannot be generalized to the whole community given the limited number of interviews conducted with representatives from community organizations. Additional research at this level would allow the development of more definitive statements concerning the partnerships and relationships developed with community organizations.

A third area for possible investigation concerns the data collection and data reporting systems in place. All Resources Centres studied collect the information necessary to submit quarterly reports to MCSS. However, the forms used by the Windsor RC and the Sudbury RCs are not the same, which means that the information presented to MCSS is not consistent among all RCs. Furthermore, the Sudbury Resource Centres do not all present the same information under a single item. For examples, the item "total clients served" includes SAR and non-SAR clients in some RCs whether it only includes SARs

in others. These inconsistencies in the presentation of the reports could lead to misinterpretations of the information presented.

In addition, further investigation concerning the appropriateness of the data collection systems in place may be warranted. While it has been possible to obtain an overview of the information collected by, and of the data collection systems in place in, each RC, detailed information has not been collected from the RCs which were not visited. Specifically, it would be important to assess whether the data collection mechanisms in place in the smaller RCs (i.e. manual) are sufficient or whether electronic data collection systems comparable to those used in larger RCs is required. The larger RCs each use different data collection systems. Whether they should all use the same system, and collect and report information consistently might be an additional area for investigation.

The information collected through the conduct of this evaluation demonstrates that there is a need for more formal mechanisms to monitor the training needs of staff. As a starting point, it might be important to conduct further research into assessing the status in the training of staff and identifying specific areas where training might be required.

Lastly, it might be worthwhile to conduct further investigation into the cost-effectiveness of the operations of the smaller, more remote RCs. Specifically, a comparison of the costs and benefits involved in maintaining those RCs opened and of those that would be involved in providing outreach services in some locations would be useful. Related to this issue, it would be important to further investigate the capacity of some accountability centres to maintain services at a time when they face important budget cuts and downsizing.

APPENDIX A - EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Questions

I. Contractual Agreements and Organizational Structure

1.a) Which organizations participate as operating partners or in advisory capacity to the RCs (CECs, MCSS, Municipal agencies, other agencies and government organizations)? What are the roles of each partner? Are these roles clearly enunciated and carried out?

b) What are the roles and responsibilities of the various service providers (e.g., project sponsors/ coordinators, employers) and are these roles clearly enunciated and carried out?

2. What are the characteristics of the RC's organization structure? (i.e., single or multiple offices, integration of local office vs central office, co-location with CEC/other agencies)

3. What is internal staff organization: number, line staff vs. supervisory, internal reporting structure? What is the staff mix, specialists vs. generalists counsellors, part-time vs. full-time use of volunteers?

4. What lessons have been learned in the above areas during the implementation and development of RCs to facilitate: working arrangements between partnerships, developing well-functioning operating structures, and staffing alignments/responsibilities?

II. Services and Activities Provided by Parties

1.a) How and to what extent have the RCs developed successful partnerships among the various levels of government employers, and community groups? What are the various client services offered in the RC? What are the services provided by each partners/participants? Have RCs integrated and closed gaps between existing services in the community? Who and to what extent has it assisted in aiding client access and addressing jurisdictional issues?

b) Specifically, how and to what extent have RCs integrated HRDC services, i.e., HRDC I, MI kiosks and job banks?

c) To what extent have RCs established a single integrated system of programs and services for SARs?

d) What factors (internal, external, resource, community, etc.) advanced or hindered the above successes and integration of HRDC services? What actions can be undertaken to foster positive factors and limit negative factors?

2. Where information systems exist, what were the client volumes and characteristics (age, sex, social assistance status) for each program/service provided?

3. To what extent has the Front Door Pre-Assessment provided an effective employment information screening and initial referral service to Resource Centres for people on Social Assistance?

III. Resource Centre Objectives

1.a) Has the implementation of RCs proceeded as planned? What are the RC objectives? Have the RCs met their stated objectives as defined at implementation?

b) Which specific program models have been established at each site? What factors contributed to their successful implementation?

c) Which models were attempted but not successfully implementation? What hindered implementation?

2.a) To what extent have RC objectives and program models met client's objectives and service quality expectations?

b) What lessons have been learned in the initial implementation to promote development of client service quality in the RC?

3. Have any operational/legislative/regulatory/ jurisdictional constraints been identified that impinge on the ability of the RC to achieve its objectives? How were these handed? Are RC design features - i.e., operational guidelines that define eligibility criteria, funding limits, etc. - consistent with the stated objectives of the RCs?

IV. Funding Base

1.a) What are the sources of RC funding and the amount received from each source in the 1995/96 fiscal year? What services are provided in kind? By whom and what value?

b) What is the RC expenditure structure: operating vs. program? What are the components i.e., operating salary, rent, etc; program: by service/program component, expenditures to third party delivers

c) What is the real services delivery cost per client/caseload?

V. Accountability and Structure for Service Delivery

1.a) What tracking/monitoring mechanisms have been put in place the RCs to collect information on participants and interventions?

b) Are these adequate for measuring impacts of services on RC clients and budgets?

c) What baseline information is collected? Is it sufficient to identify client need and measure client service volumes, track expenditures and provide financial controls?

2.a) What are internal mechanisms for expenditure and revenue monitoring and control?

b) What are the reporting mechanisms to the Board of Directors or responsible partners/agencies?

3. What criteria are applied in assessing proposals from sponsors/coordinators for receiving RC funding? Do sponsors have previous experience consistent with project requirements?

4. To what extent have RCs been able to consciously act upon changes in administrative rules and regulations?

APPENDIX B - INTERVIEW GUIDES

Sudbury Resource Centre

Interview Guide

Price Waterhouse, on behalf of HRDC (Ontario Region) and MCSS, is conducting an evaluation of the RCs in both Windsor and Sudbury. The purpose of the evaluation is to review the administrative arrangements established during the implementation of the Resource Centres, including the partnerships established and the various service delivery models utilized. We are also interested in examining the lessons learned from the different experiences, including suggestions if you were to go through the same exercise again.

I have a number of questions to ask you. Some of them are asked to confirm the information already available to us. Others are asked because we don't have any information available. **If I ask questions for which you feel the answers are provided in current, up-to-date documents, please let me know and we'll move on to another question.** I will obtain a copy of the document later on. The interview is confidential. Do you have any questions before we get started?

Can you start by confirming the implementation date for this RC (official opening vs. start of operations)?

Contractual Agreements and Organizational Structure

1.a) Who are the main operating partners in the RC? Can you please describe the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners, in terms of the operations of the RC?

- Are there overlaps/duplications between the roles and responsibilities of the operating partners?

- Have their respective roles been clearly communicated? How? Does each partner have a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities?

1.b) In addition to the operating partners just discussed, are there any other formal or informal partners involved in the RC (including any committees, project sponsors, coordinators and employers)?

- What are their roles and responsibilities?
- Are these roles and responsibilities clearly understood and carried out? Are there any agreements outlining their roles and responsibilities *(obtain)*?

- Are there others who should be involved in the RC but who are not? If so, who are they? Why are they not involved? Are there plans to involve them in the future?

2.a) Can you describe the organizational structure of the RC *(get organizational chart if available)*? ***Note: for Sudbury East, get structure for all five "RCs".***

- How many staff are there (including part-time staff and volunteers)? Where are they from? What are their roles and responsibilities? Are these roles and responsibilities clearly understood?

- Please describe the reporting structure for the RC. Who has ultimate responsibility for decision making? *If different staff report to different persons:* What impact does this reporting structure have, if any, on service delivery and internal organization?

- Are there any problems or issues related to the organizational or reporting structure?

- What are the advantages/disadvantages of the structure in place?

2.b) In general, what is the mix of specialists vs. generalists within the RC? Are there any gaps in on-site skills?

- How are staff training needs assessed?

- How is staff training developed and implemented?

3. What have been the lessons learned throughout the implementation and development of the RC with respect to:

- facilitating working arrangements between organizations/partnerships?

- developing well-functioning operating structures?
- defining staffing alignments and responsibilities?

If you were to start all over again, what would you do differently (e.g., with respect to community partner participation, Francophone and visible minority inclusion)?

Services and Activities Provided by Parties

4.a) What are the services provided by the RC (core vs optional)?

- What is the rationale for each of these services?
- What equipment is available to clients?
- What is the level of usage of each service *(obtain report)*?
- To what extent has the RC integrated services (counsellors on site, job banks, LMI kiosks)?
- What factors had an impact on the integration process of MCSS, municipal, HRDC and other services? What would you recommend to foster a positive process?
- Is there is a distinction between the services provided by the various operating partners? How were the respective responsibilities determined?
- What impacts does this distinction have, if any, on the level of service delivered to the client?
- How are clients oriented toward one or the other?

4.b) To what extent would you say the RC has been successful in developing partnerships among the various service providers in the community? Who are these other service providers? What services do they deliver? How do you stay up-to-date on these service providers?

- Are the activities of the RC and those of these other service providers coordinated? If so, how?

- Have you encountered any barriers in developing these partnerships? How have they been overcome?

- Do you have any success stories to share?

4.c) Is there is any duplication of services between the RC and community agencies?

- If so, what is the extent of that duplication?

- Are there any plans to reduce this duplication, if any?

4.d) To what extent do you feel the RC has established a single integrated system of programs and services for SARs in _____? How do SARs know where to go? To what extent has the RC assisted in aiding client access employment services?

4.e) Are there any outstanding jurisdictional issues related to service delivery which need to be addressed?

5.a) Please describe the initial intake process for clients. Where do clients go first and where do they go next?

5.b) How are clients referred to the RC? How are clients referred to other relevant services (employment and non-employment related)? In what cases would a client be referred elsewhere?

- How do you know where to refer clients? Are the services provided by others in the community monitored on an ongoing basis?

- Do you monitor or keep track of referrals (e.g., in terms of outcomes)? If so, how?

- How are the education and training needs of clients assessed?

- How are client training plans developed and implemented?

- How are employment, education and/or training referrals done?

- In your view, to what extent has the front door pre-assessment process provided an effective employment information screening and initial referral service to the RC for SARs?

- What have been the lessons learned from working with other service providers?

Resource Centre Objectives

6.a) What are the objectives of the RC *(review objectives of service contract)*?

- In your opinion, has the RC met these objectives?
- Are there any objectives which have not yet been fully met?
- Are there any constraints (e.g., operational/legislative/regulatory/ jurisdictional) which have impinged on the RC's ability to achieve its objectives? Have these barriers been overcome? If so, how?

6.b) Has the implementation proceeded as planned? Have there been delays or deviations from the original plan? If yes, what has caused them?

7. Where is the RC currently with respect to the implementation plan (i.e. ahead of plan, on track, behind plan)? If behind plan, have you developed remedial plans to address the delays?

8. The model adopted for this site involves _____. How are the services of the various on-site partners coordinated?

- How successful is the _____ model? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What factors have contributed to or limited its success?
- Were there models which were attempted but not successfully implemented? If so, what hindered implementation?

9. In your opinion, to what extent are the RC programs and services meeting clients' needs? To what extent are they meeting clients' service quality expectations?

- How is the level and quality of service monitored?
- Have performance targets or service standards been developed? If so, what are they and how were they developed? How are they monitored?
- Are there client needs that are not currently being met? Are there any plans to address these service gaps?

- What have been the lessons learned throughout the implementation to promote the development of client service quality in the RC?

Funding Base

10. I would like to go over the RC's budget and confirm funding allocations.

a) Are there other sources of funding for the RC (including volunteers, partners, contributions)? From where? How much do they contribute, or what is the approximate value of their in-kind contribution (level of effort)?

b) What are the year to date expenditures? What are the remaining commitments to the end of the fiscal year?

Accountability and Structure for Service Delivery

11. Is there a tracking/monitoring system in use? Do all RC staff have access to the system? Is this system compatible with others (if relevant)?

- What type of information is collected? At what frequency?
- Who uses the information from the system? For what purposes?
- What kinds of reports are produced with the system?
- Does the system identify client needs and measure client volumes? If not, how is this information collected?
- If information concerning the needs of specific groups (i.e. Francophones, visible minorities (if relevant), persons with disabilities) collected? If yes, how is the information used?
- Does this system or others track expenditures and provide financial controls?
- Is the information currently being collected sufficient to measure the impacts of services on RC clients and budgets? Is this type of information being collected through other sources (e.g., client survey questionnaire)?
- Is there additional information required for either client case management or overall RC management?

12. What are the internal controls used for monitoring expenditures and revenues?

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- What types of management reports are produced? Who uses this information? For what purposes?

13. What criteria are applied in assessing proposals from sponsors/coordinators for receiving RC funding? Do sponsors have previous experience consistent with project requirements?

14. Do you feel supported in your activities at the RC (e.g., by management, by partners)? Have there been any changes in administrative policies and regulations since the implementation of the RC? If so, which ones? How have they been handled? have there been any barriers to addressing these changes?

15. What, if anything, is missing, and needed to make the RC a leader in the provision of integrated programs and services to SARs in _____?

16. Have there been any lessons learned, other than those already mentioned, from your involvement in the implementation and development of the RC?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

Windsor Resource Centre

Interview Guide

As you are aware, Price Waterhouse, on behalf of HRDC (Ontario Region) and MCSS, is conducting an evaluation of the RCs in both Windsor and Sudbury. The purpose of the evaluation is to review the administrative arrangements established during the implementation of the Resource Centre, including the partnerships established and the various service delivery models utilized. We are also interested in examining the lessons learned from the different experiences, including suggestions if you were to go through the same exercise again.

I have a number of questions to ask you. Some of them are asked to confirm the information already available to us. Others are asked because we don't have any information available. **If I ask questions for which you feel the answers are provided in current, up-to-date documents, please let me know and we'll move on to another question.** I will obtain a copy of the document later on. The interview is confidential. Do you have any questions before we get started?

Can you start by confirming the implementation date for the Windsor RC (official opening vs. start of operations)?

Contractual Agreements and Organizational Structure

1.a) Based on the background documentation that I have been provided, I understand that the main operating partners in the RC are MCSS and HRDC, with community agencies acting as referral partners. Can you please describe the roles of each of the operational partners, in terms of the operations of the RC?

- Are there overlaps/duplications between the roles and responsibilities of the operational partners?

- Have the respective roles been clearly communicated? How? Does each partner have a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities?

1.b) In addition to MCSS and HRDC, are there any other formal or informal partners involved in the RC (including any committees, project sponsors, coordinators and employers)?

- What are their roles and responsibilities?
- Are these roles and responsibilities clearly understood and carried out? Are there any agreements outlining their roles and responsibilities *(obtain)*?
- Are there others who should be involved in the RC but who are not? If so, who are they? Why are they not involved? Are there plans to involve them in the future?

2.a) Can you describe the organizational structure of the RC *(get organizational chart if available)*?

- How many staff are there (including part-time staff and volunteers)? Where are they from (i.e. host organization)? What are their roles and responsibilities? Are these roles and responsibilities clearly understood?
- Please describe the reporting structure for the RC. Who has ultimate responsibility for decision making? *If different staff report to different persons:* What impact does this reporting structure have, if any, on service delivery and internal organization?
- Are there any problems or issues related to the organizational or reporting structure?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of the structure in place?

2.b) In general, what is the mix of specialists vs. generalists within the RC? Are there any gaps in on-site skills?

- How are training needs assessed?
- How is training developed and implemented?

3. What have been the lessons learned throughout the implementation and development of the RC with respect to:

- facilitating working arrangements between organizations/partnerships?

- developing well-functioning operating structures?
- defining staffing alignments and responsibilities?

If you were to start all over again, what would you do differently? **(particularly with respect to community partner participation, Francophone and visible minority inclusion)**

Services and Activities Provided by Parties

4.a) What are the services provided by the RC (core vs optional)?

- What is the rationale for each of these services?
- What equipment is available to clients?
- What is the level of usage of each service *(obtain report)*?
- To what extent has the RC integrated HRDC services (counsellors on site, job banks, LMI kiosks)?
- What factors had an impact on the integration process of MCSS, Municipal HRDC services? What would you recommend to foster a positive process?
- The information I got from the documents reviewed is that there is a distinction between the services provided by MCSS and those provides by HRDC. How were the respective responsibilities determined?
- What impacts does this have, if any, on the level of service delivered to the client?
- How are clients oriented toward one or the other?

4.b) To what extent would you say the RC has been successful in developing partnerships among the various service providers in the community? Who are these other service providers? What services do they deliver? How do you stay up-to-date on these service providers?

- Are the activities of the RC and those of these other service providers coordinated? If so, how?

- Have you encountered any barriers in developing these partnerships? How have they been overcome?

- Do you have any success stories to share?

4.c) The documentation indicates that there is continued duplication of services between the RC and community agencies. Has this duplication been reduced through the partnership approach to the RC (and the implementation committee with community members)?

4.d) The background documentation indicated that a consultant was to be hired to document current service delivery organizations and identify any service gaps within the community. Has this been done? What have been the results *(get report)*? Has the RC closed any of these gaps?

4.d) Through the document review, I noticed that a significant proportion of the RC budget is targeted towards external assessment specialized client assessment as well as youth and long term SAR services. Who delivers these services? Why is it not done internally?

4.e) To what extent do you feel the RC has established a single integrated system of programs and services for SARs in Windsor? How do SARs know where to go? To what extent has the RC assisted in aiding client access employment services?

4.f) Are there any outstanding jurisdictional issues related to service delivery which need to be addressed?

5.a) Please describe the initial intake process for clients. Where do clients go first and where do they go next?

5.b) How are clients referred to the RC? How are clients referred to other relevant services (employment and non-employment related)? In what cases would a client be referred elsewhere?

- How do you know where to refer clients? Are the services provided by others in the community monitored on an ongoing basis?

- Do you monitor or keep track of referrals (e.g., in terms of outcomes)? If so, how?

- How are the education and training needs of clients assessed?

- How are client training plans developed and implemented?
- How are employment, education and/or training referrals done?
- In your view, to what extent has the front door pre-assessment process provided an effective employment information screening and initial referral service to the RC for SARs?
- What have been the lessons learned from working with other service providers?

Resource Centre Objectives

6.a) What are the objectives of the RC *(review objectives of service contract)*?

- In your opinion, has the RC met these objectives?
- Are there any objectives which have not yet been fully met?
- Are there any constraints (e.g., operational/legislative/regulatory/ jurisdictional) which have impinged on the RC's ability to achieve its objectives? Have these barriers been overcome? If so, how?

6.b) Has the implementation proceeded as planned? Have there been delays or deviations from the original plan? If yes, what have caused them?

7. Where is the RC currently with respect to the implementation plan (i.e. ahead of plan, on track, behind plan)? If behind plan, have you developed remedial plans to address the delays?

8. The model adopted for the Windsor site involves co-location of MCSS with HRDC, with the City of Windsor (MCSS) assuming functional accountability and basic administrative management of the RC. Contributing partners from the community are beginning to deliver their services on-site, and it is anticipated that there will be additional co-location in the future. How are the services of these various partners coordinated?

- How successful is the co-location model? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What factors have contributed to or limited its success?

- Were there models other than the co-location model which were attempted but not successfully implemented? If so, what hindered implementation?

9. In your opinion, to what extent are the RC programs and services meeting clients' needs? To what extent are they meeting clients' service quality expectations?

- How is the level and quality of service monitored?

- Have performance targets or service standards been developed? If so, what are they and how were they developed? How are they monitored?

- Are there client needs that are not currently being met? Are there any plans to address these service gaps?

- What have been the lessons learned throughout the implementation to promote the development of client service quality in the RC?

Funding Base

10. Break down of RC funding arrangements (as of 13/12/94) TO CONFIRM

    1995/96 - total costs $1,206,00

    HRDC - in kind contribution of $80,000 (salary) + $16,000 (benefits) = $96,000

    Mun/Prov - in kind contribution of $425,000 (salary) + $85,000 (benefits) = $510,000

    Remaining $600,000 provided through the Federal/Provincial (jobLink) initiative.

a) Are there other sources of funding for the RC (including volunteers, partners, contributions)? From where? How much do they contribute, or what is the approximate value of their in-kind contribution (level of effort)?

    Expenditure Structure - see 95/96 budget TO CONFIRM

b) What are the year to date expenditures in these areas? What are the remaining commitments to the end of the fiscal year?

Accountability and Structure for Service Delivery

11. The initial RC proposal outlines a client tracking system which would be used to track and monitor participants and interventions. Is this or any other tracking system in use? Do all RC staff have access to the system? Is this system compatible with others (if relevant)?

- What type of information is collected? At what frequency?
- Who uses the information from the system? For what purposes?
- What kinds of reports are produced with the system?
- Does the system identify client needs and measure client volumes? If not, how is this information collected?
- If information concerning the needs of specific groups (i.e. Francophones, visible minorities (if relevant), persons with disabilities) collected? If yes, how is the information used?
- Does this system or others track expenditures and provide financial controls?
- Is the information currently being collected sufficient to measure the impacts of services on RC clients budgets? Is this type of information being collected through other sources (e.g., client survey questionnaire)?
- Is there additional information required for either client case management or overall RC management?

12. What are the internal controls used for monitoring expenditures and revenues?

- What are the reporting mechanisms to the MCSS, HRDC, and the Implementation/Advisory Committee?
- What types of management reports are produced? Who uses this information? For what purposes?

13. What criteria are applied in assessing proposals from sponsors/ coordinators for receiving RC funding (e.g. Futures Youth project and the agreement with the Unemployed Help Centre)? Do sponsors have previous experience consistent with project requirements?

14. Do you feel supported in your activities at the RC (e.g., by management, by partners)? Have there been any changes in administrative policies and regulations since the implementation of the RC? If so, which ones? How have they been handled? have there been any barriers to addressing these changes?

15. What, if anything, is missing, and needed to make the RC a leader in the provision of integrated programs and services to SARs in Windsor?

16. Have there been any lessons learned, other than those already mentioned, from your involvement in the implementation and development of the RC?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.